

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Cecil K. Dotts

*"Teaching is important, but teaching was not the most important, in my opinion at the time. I deny that now. I think the teacher is the key person. But the fact (is) that society gives a higher salary to the principal and encourages people to move to positions like that. I think ideally they should all be based on the kind of contribution that they can make, rather than their status in the school. A teacher can very often be a much more important influence in the school than the principal can be. But that's society, so I was caught up with that idea that, well, if I want to advance, I've got to be a principal."*

Dr. Cecil Dotts was born September 19, 1905 in Covina, California. The sixth of seven children, Dotts attended public schools in California and received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Redlands in 1928. That same year, he arrived in Hawai'i to teach at Lincoln Junior High School in Honolulu. He later taught at Kaua'i High School and at Kona Waena High School. Beginning in 1932, Dotts was named principal of Pāhala Elementary School on the Big Island and Kawānanakoa Experimental School in Honolulu.

The outbreak of World War II brought many personnel changes in the Department of Public Instruction. After briefly working in the DPI Honolulu district office, Dotts was named supervising principal for the West Hawai'i district. Four years later, in 1946, he became director of secondary education for the territory. Because of continuous administrative reorganizations within the department, Dotts, between 1958 and 1966, served as deputy district superintendent for the island of O'ahu, supervising principal for Honolulu district elementary schools, and deputy district superintendent for all Honolulu district schools.

In 1966, Dotts joined the faculty of the University of Hawai'i as an associate professor in the College of Education. He later directed the college's teacher corps program. He retired in 1970.

Since 1982, Dotts and Mildred Sikkema have been preparing and revising a manuscript on public education in Hawai'i, 1840-1980.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Cecil K. Dotts (CD)

March 6, 1991

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Dr. Cecil Dotts on March 6, 1991, at his home in Makiki, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay. Cecil, why don't we get started then. First of all, tell me when and where you were born.

CD: [I was] born September 19, 1905 on a (orange and) lemon grove east of Los Angeles near Covina, California.

My dad at that time, owned a lemon grove (and) an orange grove. He wasn't making money fast enough, so he invested what money he had and even mortgaged his groves in order to go into a wildcat scheme where he lost practically all of it. So (as I was growing) up, we moved from place to place (where my dad worked in the citrus groves). He was getting, I think, forty or fifty cents an hour. He had been a farmer (in Pennsylvania but built houses in Los Angeles before buying the orange and lemon grove where I was born). And so (we were) living hand to mouth during those early years. Although we (were poor, we) never suffered from not enough food.

(Dad) was quite aggressive, (and before) long, he was able to buy a team of horses and do work for the different orange groves around there. In that case he would be moving around in different places where it was more suitable.

The first house we (lived in was a fairly) nice place. He apparently had used up most of his surplus money, so (we moved) into an old junk place that was practically falling down. We lived there for two or three years. There were seven of us in the family, and I was the next to the youngest. (My parents were very hard workers. Mother and the older children took care of the home and brought in a little income by growing vegetables and raising a few chickens, while Dad brought in the major income. I earned some money with a paper route which I was allowed to keep for spending money. With the team of horses my parents were able to save enough to buy a Model-T Ford car by the time I was about twelve. Not satisfied with the progress they had made in Southern California, they) wanted to go back to farming (which they had done in Pennsylvania). Out of this deal where he'd lost his money, he had gotten eighty acres of (marginal) land near Tulare, California, in the San Joaquin Valley. And he

decided to farm there. Well, that was just around the time of the war.

WN: This would be World War I?

CD: Yes, that's right. I was twelve then, so that would be 1917.

WN: Now, it seems like you moved around quite a bit [prior to the move to Tulare]. How did you adjust to these new places?

CD: No particular problem. I can't remember any traumatic experiences (adjusting to the many moves. Of course), as I grew up to be a teenager, I thought no one had worse parents than I did. (Laughs) But as I look back on it now, I (think I) was very fortunate (to be in a stable) family. My mother would help in every way she could. She raised chickens (and had a garden) to help with the income. She never (worked outside the home, though at one time) she had been a teacher. (With so many children, my mother assigned my oldest sister Kate—Katherine—to care for me. She really was my surrogate mother when I was small.)

I (never had any problem) adjusting to the (different) schools. In San Joaquin Valley, we had a one-room school (with) just about twenty-two students, with one teacher. That was quite a change (in my) experience.

WN: What kind of background, ethnically, was your father?

CD: In what sense?

WN: Well, where were [your father's] parents and grandparents from?

CD: The family apparently had come to Pennsylvania way back in the 1840s. And these young people grew up there (in a rural area in) Pennsylvania, around sixty or eighty miles from Clearfield, which is (about the) center of Pennsylvania. And he was a farmer there, that was his work. And farmers in those days did everything. They built their own houses, and they would cooperate, bringing neighbors to come in and help each other build their houses and barns and so on. That's why he was skilled (in many things) when he came to California about [1900]. That was before I was born. My other older siblings were born in Pennsylvania, but my younger brother and I were born in California.

WN: And you went to public schools?

CD: Yes. I never went to any private schools during my (elementary and high school) years.

WN: Now, at home, you had a big family. What kind of chores did you have?

CD: Up until I was twelve, I had practically no duties at home. I had three (older) sisters and two older brothers, so that any chores that had to be done, they [did]. But that all changed when we went to the San Joaquin Valley. I was in the sixth grade then. All the (older brothers and sisters) had left (home) by that time, leaving my younger brother, (Roy) and me (on the farm).

I became (my father's) assistant (at age thirteen). I was in charge of the irrigating. (We) had (developed a well) to pump water to the alfalfa and the corn—feed for the cows, pigs and chickens. It was quite a flourishing farm except that it didn't bring in enough income.

(At the) farm there was nothing (for me) to do in that (community). I don't suppose you've ever been in that area—but it's flat (and) open, almost like the Arabian desert you see on TV now. But (there) were nice-looking farms (in that area. I was kept busy helping Dad when I was not studying or reading.)

My mother (and I) did the milking, (and) I did the irrigating. We ran water (nearly a) half a mile in open ditches. (With our) team of horses (I helped with) mowing hay (or leveling an area for planting. This was necessary in order for the irrigation) water to (flow). Sometimes we'd have four horses together to do that. One time I had the privilege of driving four horses at once (which made me feel very important). (Laughs)

WN: Did your parents stress education to you at all in those early years?

CD: It's interesting to note, that it wasn't a case of stressing education. We were required, of course, to go to school in California at that time up until—I've forgotten—fourteen or fifteen years of age. But they were always in favor of our going to school. I think (they were a) little disappointed when my next older brother, who was a bright person in many respects, just couldn't stand school. So at ninth grade he quit. I don't know, maybe he finished the ninth grade. But he was not going to waste his time there. He went out on his own and developed many skills. He became quite a successful farmer, first in Southern California and then in Arizona. I was the only one (who) went beyond high school. But I think my sister and one brother finished high school. I think the rest dropped out earlier.

WN: Did you enjoy school?

CD: Yes. In fact, (laughs) the thing I enjoyed most was to play baseball. I wasn't a good baseball player, but I was good enough to be on our small school teams. I was pitcher. I was the only one big enough to be a pitcher (laughs) in that small school. Schooling was good, but I always had trouble concentrating on things. In this one-room school [in the San Joaquin Valley], they (would be) reciting over in one corner and I would be studying over in this other corner. Instead of studying, I would (often) listen to what they were doing in the other section. But I was a good enough student that I was able to pass the courses.

WN: What was the community like?

CD: Well, I can't remember. Our family didn't participate in community activities, (except that my father was on the school board of the one-room school, and I remember going to a dinner where the women brought homemade dinners in boxes with fancy ribbons. The men bid on them to get to eat with the woman who prepared the dinner.)

And another thing, as I look back on (my) experience (in my early years near Covina), we didn't have enough money to buy things. (There was) a great big—we called it the dump. People would get rid of their trash (by dumping) it in there. In those days, they didn't have bulldozers to bulldoze it around, so it was just there. So we (kids) would go out there and



pick up things. I got parts of a tricycle, and before long I had a tricycle. And pretty soon I had parts to put together a bicycle.

And (chuckles) then finally, I was able to, I don't know where I got the money, but I got enough to buy a bike. For nine dollars, I think, I bought an old bicycle. I think it was that bike that I bought for nine dollars that made it possible for me at about ten years of age to take over delivering papers in the little community. So I would go from house to house just dropping the paper and at the end of the month collecting the money and sending it in to the headquarters in Los Angeles. For that age, why, this was a very good experience. I remember one time—I'm giving you a lot of detail here.

WN: That's fine.

CD: One (afternoon when I was delivering papers, the two pedals on the bike kept coming apart) and, of course, I couldn't ride the bicycle. I didn't have any tools along, so in order to fix it, I had to pick up some rocks and pound it. The rock wouldn't go in where it needed to be, so I had to take a coin out of my pocket, put the coin in there, and then pound the coin. But when I took my money into the post office to get a money order to send to the company, the postman said, "What's wrong with these coins?"

I said, "I don't know."

(Laughter)

CD: That worried me for a long time. Finally I went in to the postman, and I said, "I told you that I didn't know what was wrong with those coins. I did that. I was trying to fix my bicycle, and I did it."

"What are you talking about, kid? I don't remember anything like that."

(Laughter)

CD: Quite a letdown.

WN: What were your teachers like when you were going to school?

CD: It's hard to say, because, of course, there were many different teachers. I remember (that) it didn't take me long to (learn) to read. My birthday is in September. I think you had to be six years of age by September 1. I wasn't six at that time so I couldn't go to school that year. So I went in almost a year late. So all through my schooltime I was, agewise, older than the others. But I don't know if that really caused any problem as far as I'm concerned, except that I was a little bit more mature than (most) of the others.

And I remember one incident when I was—I believe it was around the first grade. The teacher would have us stand up and read from our books, the old system of teaching reading. I used to get so disgusted with (some of) the other kids (who) couldn't read. They were stumbling all around. When I'd get up, at least I thought I was reading quite well. But I'd sit there, bored, (waiting for my turn to read again). They couldn't (chuckles) read the words. But that's one

illustration. In other words, the methods that they were using were certainly typical of the old-style kind of teaching that had no creativity to it at all.

But in this one-room school that I went to up in San Joaquin Valley, this teacher was very inexperienced. I don't know whether she'd ever gone to college or not, because (if they were needed), high school graduates (were) put in as teachers. Some of my [fellow] graduates the year I graduated went directly into teaching in California. This teacher (may have) been one of those, (but we all) got along quite well.

WN: So let's take you up until 1928 when you came to Hawai'i—where you went to school, what kind of degrees you got, and so forth.

CD: As I went on through high school, I had no idea that I could afford going on to (college, but I must have been thinking about it because I took most of) the courses that would be required. I took Latin, physics, (English, history, algebra, geometry and trigonometry). When I submitted my transcript, (it was accepted).

Three of us (boys) got fairly well acquainted in high school. We had occasion to work together in different things, in committees, student body activities, and so on. I was yell leader for the school as well as tackle on the lightweight football team. While I was playing on the lightweight team, which played first and [then] the heavyweight team would come on, I would rush (in) and get a shower and (then) take over as yell leader (during the heavyweight game). But this one good friend was assistant yell leader. So he would take over while I was playing in the (lightweight) football game.

(When) the three of us (were talking one day), one of them said, "You know, I want to go on to college, and I think I can work my way through."

And the other one said, "I think I can, too."

Well, I said, "I don't know whether I can or not. I don't have any money at all."

"Save something until it's time to go."

I got a job (that) summer (running) a spray rig. (I would drive along between the rows of orange trees with a spraying machine pulled by a team of horses. I would spray poison on every leaf on each tree to kill the scale that was on the leaves.) I ran that spray rig for (that) summer, and saved a hundred dollars by the time school was to start.

In the meantime, the three of us had decided to go down to the University of Redlands, because of this one person—I think he was a Baptist, and the University of Redlands was a Baptist college. We checked into what the possibilities were. All three of us thought maybe with what little money we had and maybe even a scholarship of some kind we might be able to go to college. So we said we're going to try.

I went to my dad, and I said, "Dad, I want to go to college, and I think I can make it."

He said, "Well, kid, I was counting on you helping me here." At that time, he had given up

his farm and he was taking care of orange groves in (Lindsey, California, a small town along the foothills in the San Joaquin Valley). I had been helping him off and on during my school years there.

Well, I said, "Dad, I'm anxious. I don't think you need to help me, because I think I can do it. Glenn and Jewell think they can make it, and I think I can. I'll work at something till I go (and get jobs there during the school year)."

I can remember Dad was putting on the roof on a house. And I was up there pounding the nails along with him. And so he said, "Well, okay. But I can't help you." So the three of us then went (to the University of Redlands where we had visited a few weeks before). One of them had a car, so we went down together. I (had been) very active in the Methodist Church. The University of Redlands was a very conservative (Baptist college). Soon I got active in the (Student) Volunteers: (young) people (who hoped to volunteer to) go to other countries and teach (our) religion. (It was) very much (like what) happened here in Hawai'i. The missionaries came from Boston (in 1820) to save the heathen here. (It) was my hope (to do something like that in a foreign country).

So I went through college with a (partial) scholarship, (but I had to work besides that). I started out working thirty-two hours a week in a tire shop changing tires for cars as they came in. But by Christmastime, I was failing in two or three subjects because I just didn't have time to study. Also, I was still interested in athletics, so I went out for the cross-country team. They ran about four- or five-mile races. Failing meant that I couldn't take part in athletics and might (even be dropped from) college. So I quit that job and started working as a dishwasher in a restaurant.

All the (four years) I was able to work my way through, except that as time went on, my work became heavier in the courses, and I (got loans of \$750 from my dad and \$1,200 from my brother. My dad, to my surprise, came to my graduation, and after I had paid back \$100 he insisted that I not pay him the rest. I paid back my brother during the year after graduation.)

My bachelor's degree from University of Redlands was in economics and sociology with a minor in science. Because I thought, well, if I'm going to be a missionary, maybe I'll be a medical missionary and go on and become a physician. (Chuckles) Not realizing that that's a lot of money involved there.

So I finished (with a bachelor's degree). These other two pals were both qualifying to be teachers. I was still determined that I was going to be a missionary, and so I didn't try to qualify for teaching (and didn't know what I would do the following year). One (day) I was talking with one of the girls (at Redlands), and found out that she was from Honolulu. Well, I didn't even know where Honolulu was. But she said, "Why don't you teach in Honolulu?"

I said, "I can't teach. I didn't prepare to teach."

"They need teachers very badly. Why don't you apply?"

My roommate and I both filled out applications and sent them in. He was qualified to teach in

California, as my two pals were, so he didn't even follow up on it. But I had nothing else to do.

WN: What did you have to have to be qualified to teach in California?

CD: I can't remember the specifics, but there were certain courses that you had to take, and you had to have practice teaching also. These others would go out and practice teach. I hadn't done any of that. The qualifications were simply that you had to have these courses. Some of my sociology courses might have been considered, but there wasn't enough. I didn't even try to qualify to teach in California because all the other people (who) were qualified had met all these requirements and I hadn't.

Oh, that summer [prior to coming to Hawai'i] I tried to be a salesman. I told you earlier (about the) spray dope that I would spray on trees. Well, a company offered me a job that summer selling that spray dope. I worked for about a month and a half that first summer before I knew what I was going to do. My brother was willing to help me. I was living with my brother.

In July, I think, I received this wire from the school department [i.e., Department of Public Instruction] here. "You have been appointed to Lincoln Junior High School." I don't think it even said what I'd been appointed for. But I had enjoyed math in high school, so they (had) me teach math. My physical ed teacher, coach, had recommended me as I would make a good teacher. So lo and behold, I was appointed math teacher and assistant coach of football, since I'd played on the high school lightweight team. I was captain of the track team my last year in college, so I was (also) the coach of the track (team)

I was coach of the Lincoln Junior High School debate team. They had these teams even in junior high school in those days. I never realized until later why we won the championship for the Honolulu city: because these were the English standard school kids.

(Laughter)

CD: They could all speak very good English. But lo and behold, over on Kaua'i, I was also debate coach over there. We defeated O'ahu, Kaua'i High School did.

WN: Well, let me back up just a little bit before we get into [Lincoln Junior High] and Kaua'i High School. You were saying that in order to be qualified to teach in California, you needed to take a certain amount of courses in college?

CD: Yes.

WN: As well as take an exam, pass a test?

CD: No. In those days, I don't think you had to take an exam. I think you were [already] qualified. In other words, you received a teaching certificate if you [took] these courses.

WN: Now, can you compare that to Hawai'i? What were the requirements to teach in Hawai'i?



CD: At that time, elementary teachers (who were going to teach) grades one to eight went through the [Territorial] Normal [and Training] School. And to get into the normal school, you didn't even have to finish high school. You could go from the eighth grade for four years of normal school and be qualified as a teacher. Or you could finish high school, and [after] two years of normal school, you could become a teacher.

WN: I see. So to teach high school, you needed to graduate from high school.

CD: That's right, yes. So, because I had a bachelor's degree and I had these qualifications and recommendation from my coach, I was qualified. No exam or anything, just simply appointed.

WN: Seems like you were well qualified . . .

CD: Well . . .

WN: . . . comparatively speaking.

CD: Comparatively speaking. But as I say, in high school [teaching], practically everyone had a bachelor's degree, it's the elementary schools that didn't. You may know the history of Hawai'i here. A large number of these people who went through the normal school later went on to the Teachers College and became qualified as secondary [school] teachers and principals.

WN: Was there an equivalent to a normal school in California?

CD: I really never went into that specifically, and I don't recall if there was. I think there probably was.

WN: So you [taught at] Lincoln [Junior High School]. Was that seventh, eighth and ninth grade you taught?

CD: That's right, seventh, eighth, and ninth. They were called junior high schools then. They've been called intermediate schools since then.

WN: Okay, let me take you to 1928. Okay, you just got accepted to come to Hawai'i to teach. What were your thoughts about doing that?

CD: (Chuckles) I didn't know---I had to find out where Hawai'i was. One fellow says, "Oh, you know, the Sandwich Islands."

And I said, "No, I don't know the Sandwich Islands." My feeling was, boy, am I glad I've got a job. The only job I had was to stay and work with my brother. He was willing to have me. But he couldn't pay me more than fifty cents an hour or something like that.

So when I arrived here, I didn't know anything about what I was going to get into. I think I did, before I arrived, find that I was going to teach physical education and mathematics. I think I knew that much. Fortunately, I [arrived] early. Most teachers would come in at the last minute, and some of them actually late. But I came about two weeks early, I think, so I

was very fortunate. Elsie Astleford was our librarian at Lincoln Junior High. I went in to see her. She took to me right away as a prospective young man. She did everything she could to help me. I said, "I don't know anything about teaching. Do you call the kids by their first name or last name?"

And she said, "Oh, of course you call them by their first name."

Of course, in college, (we were) always called by "Mr. Dotts" and so on. So she gave me all kinds of motherly advice. For instance, she had some books in the library on how to teach physical education. So I studied them.

WN: Let me turn the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Now, were there others like you at [Lincoln] who had come from the Mainland and had no real formal teaching training and who just had college degrees?

CD: I'm assuming they all had college degrees, and I'm assuming they had some teacher preparation. But I didn't. But as I say, when you're appointed there, those questions weren't asked. You just went ahead, and if you did your teaching all right, that's okay. Our principal at that time was very strong on discipline.

WN: What was your principal's name?

CD: Thomas [J.] Martin. We called him T. J. Martin. I don't know how much he knew about teaching, but he was principal. In those times we had evaluations. Around March or April we were called in for our interviews. He rated me satisfactory in everything except discipline. I wondered what he meant by that. I don't know whether he told me or someone else told me that as long as I was in the classroom, it was okay. These English standard school [students] were full of life. They just liked to have fun. So they said, "When you go out of the classroom for something, that place is a hullabaloo. They throw chalk and erasers all over the room. They put a guard outside. When they see you coming back, everything is okay."

(Laughter)

CD: So he said, "That's why I rated you unsatisfactory. You weren't able to control the kids." I thought I was controlling them all right when I was there. (Chuckles)

WN: This was an English standard school. Now, were most of the children there *Haole*?

CD: Remember, the English standard school, they had to take an oral English test. Not the academic test, but the oral English test. This school started in 1924, I think, Lincoln Junior High, and I came there in September 1928. The kids that were there, quite a number of them,

were Oriental or part-Hawaiian or Portuguese. In other words, for Lincoln, *Haoles* were the largest percentage, and Japanese, Chinese, part-Hawaiian, and some Portuguese.

WN: Now, an oral test, do you happen to remember how it was conducted?

CD: I know that the kid had to appear before the committee. Of course, the kid would be scared half to death, (chuckles) and sometimes if they weren't real confident in their English. [Some] would fail. So they would be rejected. But these kids that got in tended to be more aggressive kinds of kids. I had one boy of Japanese ancestry on my debate team. He was very good. And the other kids were *Haole*. One was part-Portuguese, I think.

WN: So the selection was based on ability to express themselves in English?

CD: That's right.

WN: So where was [Lincoln] School at that time? Is that on the corner of Beretania and Victoria, I believe?

CD: (Yes), that's where I taught. And Thomas Square was my physical education area. It wasn't all landscaped the way it is now. It was just an ordinary [field]. I think we had jumping pits over there, and so on, on Thomas Square. That was the year '28-'29. Our football team got permission to practice on the Punahou [School] grounds.

WN: Now, you told me your principal was T. J. Martin. And you weren't sure how much he knew about education. What were the qualifications to be a principal back then?

CD: In practically all cases I'm assuming they had to have a bachelor's degree for junior and senior high school. Every year they would have an examination for anyone who wished to become a principal. They would send out a circular to the schools and if you're interested they gave you an application form. So believe it or not, [during] my second year of teaching, I applied to be a principal. I (chuckles) failed the test.

WN: Okay, so you were at Linekona for one year, and then in '29, you moved to . . .

CD: Remember, that was Lincoln. Linekona was a name that was given later. See, the Lincoln Junior High School [eventually] moved out and became Stevenson Intermediate School up on the foot of . . .

WN: Punchbowl.

CD: Punchbowl. And then I think around that time they moved the school for the extremely slow learners [from] Ala Moana, down at the ocean, [to the grounds of Lincoln Junior High School]. I think that's when it became called Linekona School.

WN: I see. Well, when you were there it was called Lincoln Junior High?

CD: It was Lincoln Junior High School, that's right.

WN: So you were there for a year, then you moved to Kaua'i High School in '29. Why did you move to Kaua'i High School?

CD: I applied to teach high school. In the spring, you'd [be asked the] question: where do you want to be next year? You could remain in the same school, or change. I [wanted to] teach high school. In those days, the openings were in the rural areas. They offered me Kaua'i High School. That was fine, as far as I was concerned. So I accepted that.

WN: So you had a college degree, and the other high school teachers, especially the local ones, were high school graduates with normal school education?

CD: (No.) Nearly all of the (high school teachers were from the Mainland at that time and had college degrees. Local-born teachers would be considered only for elementary teaching unless they had obtained a bachelor's degree.)

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, so you were at Kaua'i High School teaching high school. What were your thoughts about that when you moved over there?

CD: My thought at first was, this is great, I sure appreciate the change. And I wasn't aware [of it] at the time, but Kaua'i High School was probably the nearest school [in philosophy to] Lincoln Junior High as I could have gone to. Because Lihu'e Elementary School had an English standard section at that time, and so a lot of [students who] were going to Lihu'e Elementary School [later] came to Kaua'i High School. Those who could afford to do it went to Punahou and places like that. So quite a number of my students were very fluent speakers. That's partly why we defeated O'ahu [in debate]. We had these kids [who] could speak very well.

WN: Did you notice a big difference between, say, Lincoln Junior High, which was English standard, and Kaua'i High School, which was a, you know, [typical] public school?

CD: As I look back on it now, I sure can. Besides teaching math at Kaua'i High School and some coaching, I [taught] beginning science and civics. (I would sometimes lecture to my civics classes. I didn't know why at the time but by) the time the bell would ring, some of them would be fast asleep. (Laughs) As I think back on it, they couldn't understand what I was saying. They just didn't know English well enough. But they were much easier to work with than the kids at Lincoln Junior High. I didn't have any problem with discipline on Kaua'i. They cooperated, and it worked out very well, (except that I am afraid they were not learning very much from me).

WN: Now, where did you live on Kaua'i?

CD: (Most of us) had teachers' cottages right on the campus.

WN: And at Lincoln Junior High, where did you live?

CD: We had to take care of our own housing. I found a place right across from Washington



Intermediate School, where it is now. Then that person gave up the place she was renting and moved over near Lincoln School. I don't know why she did it, but it turned out that I didn't have to walk so far.

WN: Did you pay rent for that place in Honolulu?

CD: Oh, yes. See, in those days, you got free rent on the rural islands, rural districts. But in Honolulu, you had to pay your own. You (could live anyplace you wanted to). A lot of the teachers here in Honolulu lived down [near] the beach and would swim every day. But I wasn't much of a swimmer and never really cared for it. I was glad to stay up right near Lincoln Junior High.

WN: So if you taught in the neighbor islands, you got housing?

CD: Yes. All the neighbor island teaching [positions] that I had had housing, and there was no charge for it. In later years, they started charging for the houses in the rural areas. In some cases, they didn't have enough housing, and people would have to rent outside the schools.

WN: Did that factor into your decision to move to Kaua'i?

CD: No, that didn't come into it at all. I simply wanted to teach in high school, and that was a good chance.

WN: How were your relations with the administration there?

CD: T. J. Martin [at Lincoln Junior High School] was a strong leader. He was a disciplinarian. We liked him, and he was trying to do a good job. He even brought in a person to conduct a course for us, and I enjoyed the course. But Kaua'i High School had a completely laissez-faire administrator. (Chuckles) You ask him something, [and he would say], "What would you suggest?" He had no ideas of his own at all. So the faculty morale was very poor there.

I was there [for] two years. The second year I was there, the beginning day of school, there was a (lot of confusion) around the campus. A bunch of kids didn't know what to do. They didn't know where they were going (to class) or anything. In working out their plans for the year, the [teachers and administrators] always had to assign (students) ahead of time—(during the previous June)—so that when (they) came in the first day of school, they'd know where to go. A whole bunch of kids had never been (assigned). They knew they were supposed to come to Kaua'i High School, but no contact had been [made] with them. So they arrived on the campus not having the slightest idea what they were to do. (Chuckles) So there was a mess around there for a while. I think it was a case of the principal turning this over to a teacher, and the teacher wasn't qualified to handle it. So she either didn't do anything or got balled up and forgot to check on these (students). But that's an illustration of the kind of thing. He [principal] was a good storyteller, and he'd get up before the assembly at Kaua'i High School and sing songs to them. And the kids loved that. But as far as any leadership is concerned, we were disgusted. I was asked by a leader in the community to dinner one night. I don't know how come, but in the course of the dinner, the person asked me, "What do you think of the principal?" And I told her. (Chuckles)

WN: Oh-oh.

CD: And somehow or other, that got back to the principal. I was called on the carpet. I think he was on the verge of firing me.

(Laughter)

CD: I was telling the truth, in my opinion. That was my reason for getting out of Kaua'i High School. I was enjoying the work there. But while I was there, a principal of Līhu'e Elementary School was conducting a university course. I signed up to take that course, and it turned out that I liked him very much. I told him what I thought about teaching at Kaua'i High School. And he said, "Why don't you come over next year and teach with me? I'm going to Kona as principal of Kona Waena High School." It was a high school and elementary school at that time. He said, "Why don't you apply for it?" So I applied, and I was appointed over there.

In the meantime, that first summer that I was here in Hawai'i, I didn't take any [course] work at the University [of Hawai'i]. I went to the Mainland and worked for my brother and saw my bride-to-be. But the second summer, the summer of 1930, I started taking courses at the university. I was allowed to come into a course that Miles Cary, the principal of McKinley High School—you probably know of him—was teaching. He was teaching it just for his faculty, so I couldn't join it for credit. I was simply allowed to come in as an auditor. So I learned enough about what McKinley was doing that when I went to Kona Waena High School, the principal, Arthur Harris, said, "How would you like to start a core studies program here?"

I said, "Sure, I'd love to," even though I didn't know what I was getting into. I set it up on the basis of what I knew. The principal was quite pleased with what I was (planning and encouraged me to go ahead).

WN: Could you describe for me what Miles Cary was doing at McKinley?

CD: Miles Cary (became principal at McKinley in 1924. Before long, he got especially concerned with) the slow kids that were just not accomplishing anything in school. So he started working with (some teachers on what to do about it. They began) setting up things so that the kids were participating in what they were doing, not just being (told what to do). A cooperative kind of relationship (developed: principal, a few teachers and the students).

(They were encouraged with their progress and) decided that if (this can) work for these kids, it should work for the whole [student body]. That's (about how the McKinley "core" program) started around 1927. By 1932, the faculty was ready to take a course under (Cary's leadership) at the University (of Hawai'i). It wasn't required, I'm sure, but [it was for] all those who wanted to. There must have been twenty-five or thirty of the faculty at McKinley taking this course: How do you move from where we are now into a better program working cooperatively with kids?

WN: Was McKinley considered a leader in innovation at that time because of Miles Cary?

CD: Well, this is a long story, [but] I think that McKinley under Miles Cary's leadership is one of the best examples of good education in Hawai'i. I know more about it now than I did at that time, why they were doing it that way. In order for them to make these changes, they worked closely with the school administration. Oren [E.] Long was (deputy and then) superintendent [of schools] (during those years. McKinley) worked closely with the school administration and the commissioners of (public instruction). At that time, they [board of education] were called commissioners of public instruction. (McKinley) got permission to set up this experimental program. So it was (to become) a very different kind of a school. Miles Cary developed his master's degree describing the kind of school that he wanted to set up. It's a big volume of 300 pages. I've used it as a reference in our research. [Cary, Miles E., *A Vitalized Curriculum for McKinley High School*, 1930.]

WN: Well, you mentioned Oren Long as superintendent, and you mentioned the school board at that time. What were your thoughts then of that administration? What were your thoughts on the administration at that time, territory-wide?

CD: Well, I've always been sort of a maverick in some ways. I thought things could be done better. But I had confidence in Oren Long. I had confidence in the others, that they were trying to do the best thing and that I could learn from them. So my attitude toward the [territory] school department was very favorable. I had the feeling during those earlier years that what I would like to do would be to get into a position where I could be more of an influence on what was happening. Probably overconfident (chuckles) in my ability, but. . . .

WN: Okay. So you were at Kona Waena High School from 1931. What kind of a change was that to you?

CD: In what sense?

WN: Compared to Kaua'i High School.

CD: Oh. (Chuckles) Kona Waena was a well-organized school. The principal was easygoing in terms of working with faculty, but he knew what he wanted to do. He knew how he wanted to work with the faculty. He gave encouragement to all the different points of view there. I felt very confident working there. It was such a contrast to the laissez-faire attitude at [Kaua'i High School. And the faculty, as far as I could tell, enjoyed that kind of relationship.

WN: Who was the principal? What was his name?

CD: Arthur Lee Harris. He's still here, living down in Waikīkī.

WN: Oh, really?

CD: Yeah.

WN: Okay. Now, Kona Waena, I know, is a very unique area. I think, for one thing, they had the coffee schedule. What do you remember about that?

CD: When I went to Kona Waena in '31, they had the regular school year. But the parents were

having a very hard time. Coffee prices were low and they couldn't hire people to pick the coffee. So for some time there, some years, their children were allowed to stay home [to pick coffee] and miss school. But school went on as usual. It really disrupted the program and was a handicap to the kids. So it was around that time when I was there, 1932, that they were working on the idea of changing the school year (to start) about a month [or more] later and run up to (near the end of) August. And that was carried on until [1969].

WN: Was there considerable debate? Was there debate or disagreement on the merits of implementing that kind of a schedule?

CD: Oh, yes. But the preponderance of thinking around that time when it started was that these coffee farmers had to have help. Otherwise, they would just not be able to pick their coffee. But the controversy grew as time went on, as Kona became more of a [diverse] community with other groups. There were only about six schools in Kona that were on the coffee schedule. Kona Waena and some of the other small schools. That's why there was a controversy there year after year, until finally a study [was] made on whether or not they really needed to continue. And it was dropped then [in 1969]. By that time, the tourists had been coming more and more. So it became more of a tourist place than it was a coffee place.

WN: Was it disruptive to the teachers, administration, and students at all?

CD: You mean, the fact the kids weren't there?

WN: Yeah . . .

CD: Oh, yes, surely. So teachers had to adapt. I don't think [they] were very enthusiastic about the idea of the change of the year. But they went along with it. Some of them, I guess, transferred out. The year was over in time to be transferred to another school. In other words, the school year always ended in August. If a teacher was really anxious to take [university course] work during the summer, they were given a special privilege. I don't know if they could do it every summer, but they could go to [the] university in place of teaching. [The school would] get a substitute for them.

Well, you (let me) run on and on. So we're taking an awful long time. (Laughs)

WN: No, that's okay. This is the kind of interview that I wanted to conduct. We were talking about Oren E. Long being the superintendent, but I think Oren E. Long took over in '34. While you were in Kona Waena, the superintendent was Will Crawford. What do you remember about him?

CD: I never knew Will Crawford well. I knew of him, but I didn't know him (personally). Whereas I got well acquainted with Oren Long. Of course, Oren Long was deputy superintendent at that same time Will Crawford was the superintendent. So even when he was deputy superintendent, I had contacts with him. But the only contacts I had with Will Crawford was a more formal kind of thing, that I'll go and hear him at a meeting or something. I don't recall Will Crawford actually [coming] around to the schools. Whereas Oren Long came around to the schools once a year or (more often).



WN: At Kona Waena and at Kaua'i, what kind of contact with the community did you have?

CD: Those contacts in both places were not of an educational nature particularly. For instance, at Kaua'i I think I was advisor (to a) YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] boys' group. So I got acquainted with some community people that way. I also belonged to the church there, Līhu'e Union Church, I think it was. I got acquainted with people that way. But otherwise, there was very little contact. Similarly in Kona Waena, the contact was more with the church and with the Lion's Club. I didn't have a YMCA group there.

WN: Were you encouraged at all to get involved like this or was it purely voluntary?

CD: It was really voluntary. We weren't discouraged from getting involved. There was nothing like what we're talking about now, the school/community-based management.

WN: Okay. And about this time, this is when you took the principal's exam.

CD: Yes. See, I had taken it before and failed it, so I took it this second time, and that's when I passed it. (Chuckles)

WN: Do you remember what was on the test?

CD: Not specifically. But the procedure there for several years was, when you put in your application to apply for a principalship, you were sent a list of books. You were supposed to be familiar with those books and available at a certain date to come to Honolulu and meet with the board of examiners. The board of examiners would examine you on the basis of your recommendations from people, the principal. That's one reason, I'm sure, I didn't (pass the exam) [the first time] on Kaua'i. But I'm sure the principal in Kona Waena did recommend me. Anyway, so you come before the board of examiners, and they ask you questions on the basis of the books and also your teaching experience.

WN: What made you decide to be a principal?

CD: Eager beaver. (Chuckles)

WN: Was there any kind of frustration on your part being a teacher?

CD: No, I think it was mostly that at that time, which I don't hold anymore, the teacher was the lowest level (chuckles) in the school system, and I'd like to rise up in the system. So this is why I wanted to pass the exam.

WN: Well, how do you feel? Are you getting tired?

CD: I'm kind of wearing down.

WN: Okay. Why don't we stop here.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 21-14-2-91

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Cecil K. Dotts (CD)

March 13, 1991

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Dr. Cecil Dotts on March 13, 1991, at his home in Makiki. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Cecil, why don't we begin this second session by—you know, we were just getting you out of Kona Waena High School in 1932. Did you have anything more you wanted to say about that?

CD: Yes, I wanted to comment just a little bit. I think what I was doing at Kona Waena was not what I would recommend now, but it was an attempt along the lines that I'm convinced is the way of the future as far as the public schools in Hawai'i [are] concerned. I mentioned earlier on the tape that I heard about Miles Cary and got acquainted with him a little bit in the first years that he was principal of McKinley High School. So I asked permission to sit in with a faculty group up at the university that he was conducting for his staff. I learned later that that was really the key group that was starting the so-called core program at McKinley High School. I sat in on those discussions, and it gave me some idea of what Miles Cary and his outstanding teachers were trying to do. And essentially it's what I'm going to describe as I go along in our interview.

But I was very naive (chuckles) in that point of view, because, as I mentioned earlier, I had no courses in education in college. I didn't plan to be a teacher. But when I came to teach here, I found that it was really what I wanted to do. So I watched for opportunities to develop along the lines that I thought I should. Right now, if I were to do it over again, I would start quite differently. I would try to get my own personal background much more developed: my understanding of how children grow and develop and how that development has to relate to the total community.

But I had a glimpse of that. So when I went to Kona Waena, fortunately, from my standpoint, Arthur Lee Harris, the principal, was open to that. He thought that was a very important way to work. Whereas, my previous principal (chuckles) hadn't been interested in those things at all. So he [Harris] encouraged me to go ahead and try to conduct my classes at Kona Waena like that. We ignored the traditional course of study that was carried on in a good number of the schools for English and social studies. And even though we did carry on the history and the English that typically was done, we tried to do it in a way of working cooperatively (with)

the students.

And out of that, just as an illustration, we were reading (one of Shakespeare's plays, it may have been) the *Merchant of Venice* in our literature program for English class. We decided to put on a play on that in the school auditorium. (Chuckles) So these kids developed their own costumes for all the characters, and took these parts, and appeared before the student body and faculty. I don't know what other people thought of it, but (chuckles) we had some interesting times out of it. It probably wasn't the most educational kind of thing that we might have done, but at least it was an illustration of breaking away from the traditional kind of approach and trying something different.

WN: So the students never did a play like that before?

CD: As far as I know, they didn't. They could have, especially in the lower grades, because teachers in the lower grades did tend to work more along that line. But as you go up the grades, more and more there's a tendency to teach the subjects, and everything else is to be ignored, or at least a good percentage of it.

Well, I think that's enough about Kona Waena. Unless you [have] further questions, I'll move on.

WN: I need to ask you couple more questions. You were talking about Miles Cary and his core program. Can you just summarize what that is and how that differed from the traditional way of teaching?

CD: The gist of what developed—and it's described in Miles Cary's master's thesis at the university—was that a youngster should experience what would make a good, humane society in school. As much as possible, the school should be set up on the basis that gives them a sort of apprenticeship into citizenship as an adult. So the whole McKinley High School program was carried on this way from about 1930 up to about 1946, when Miles Cary left and went to the Mainland [Cary left McKinley in 1948]. He had a number of teachers that were working closely with him.

It was controversial because many of the teachers had come through their experience that teaching subjects is the important thing to do, [and not to] waste time on these other things. So we had even people out in the community fighting the core program, because they felt that it was unfair to the students.

WN: Other than the courses taught, what was actually done in the core program that would make it so controversial?

CD: English and social studies were completely reorganized within the ideal class. The teachers were allowed to go as far into this as they wished. If they didn't feel confident in doing it the way Miles Cary and some of the others felt it should, they could simply teach English and social studies the way that had been done before. But they were encouraged to move so that the students had a great deal to say about what was conducted. They chose the kinds of work that they would carry on, and they would, to a considerable extent, conduct the work of the class, especially in small committees.

Also, in the total school organization, there was an organization of the student body that even had a junior police officer organization. They had a court set up so that the youngsters who the junior police had caught were taken before the court. This is a student court with, of course, teacher advisors. As much as possible, the whole school organization was set up on the basis of an adult society for youngsters' apprenticeship into this society.

A number of outstanding people were in that. A good illustration is. . . (Chuckles) The name slipped me. Well, he was vice-president of the University of Hawai'i.

WN: President?

CD: Vice-president. I'll think of his name in a minute. I know his family. He's a good illustration of that. He was very enthusiastic about the program as he went through it. He even followed Miles Cary. When Miles Cary left here—he went to the University of Minnesota as a professor there—this person even went along and took his graduate work at the University of Minnesota. He and his wife both were very enthusiastic about it. When Miles Cary died in 1959, (there was) a memorial [service] for him here, and a large turnout of former students came to it.

And yet all the way through there was this conservative point of view that you're wasting the time of these kids. This was the struggle that Miles Cary went through because of the feeling that he was really not supported fully. The school department [i.e., Department of Public Instruction] approved these things he was doing, but even I didn't see ways to give him the kind of support as I look back on it now. As we go on further I may have a few more comments on the McKinley program. But those are the main points that I think of now, and I'm not sure they're very coherent as I speak of them.

WN: I think it's very clear. You also talked about the community at Kona Waena, getting the community involved. Was that a Miles Cary concept?

CD: Oh, yes, by all means. He was active in civic groups. He was president of the Hawai'i Association for United Nations, I think it was called. It was around 1946, '47, when we were active in this local association trying to describe and explain it to the community. We had these community meetings for it. And he was active in a number of these things in the community. He was active in the teachers' association and served on a number of committees to relate to the community. So that he, himself, demonstrated what he was trying to get the school to do by actually working in cooperation with the community.

This point of view, then, is one that worked on the basis that a young person growing up should have the kind of environment in the school that gives him a relationship with people, with the other students, in which each one respects the other, each one considers the other points of view, and try to come to cooperative decisions instead of demanding this and demanding that. The teacher will be working in that same way and encouraging that kind of relationship and setting up the class in such a way that that spirit is encouraged in the classroom. But that also, the student needs that in the home, because if the home is a dictatorship or if the home is laissez-faire where they can do anything they want to, even boss the parents and that kind of thing, this undermines what the school is trying to do.



This comes to what is being talked about now, the school/community-based management. This is a concept that started way back in the 1890s with [schools superintendent] Henry [S.] Townsend [1896-99] encouraging these ideas. But the other point of view, that [traditional] subjects are important and schools should not fool around with what goes on in the community, [prevailed]. Henry Townsend took the point of view that schools should be very much concerned about [the community]. He was finally thrown out or not reappointed as superintendent [in 1899]. This has happened throughout the history of Hawai'i's public schools here. People who take that [kind of] broad point of view which I am mentioning have tended to lose their status in the school department.

But what I'm trying to emphasize here is, it appears now that that point of view is coming forward. And this is a point that we (are making) in our book, that after a hundred years of trying to work along this line, it's beginning to flourish. And school/community-based management, if it succeeds, will be an example of what the whole school system and the whole community and the whole government, all of them, working together, could do. So, as I say, Miles Cary had that point of view. Henry Townsend had it in the 1890s. [Vaughan] MacCaughey had it in the 1920s. Miles Cary was the next outstanding one that picked that idea up. I knew him personally. I used to go to his home. He would just floor me, because I didn't know [about] all these things. He'd talk about these books that he'd read and the point of view of those people. I agreed with it, but (chuckles) I didn't really understand it (very) well.

WN: This Arthur Lee Harris, was he sort of a follower of Miles Cary?

CD: Yes, as I say, he encouraged me. And later, he was picked to head McKinley for a year while Miles Cary was away. As I'd said to you last time, I think he is still alive. I don't know how his health is now. The last time I talked with him, he was very alert and very capable, might even be one you might want to look into. He left Hawai'i in the 1940s and went to the United States Department of Education and served there for some years and then came back here to retire.

WN: Okay. Well, from 1932, you left Kona Waena and you went to Pāhala Elementary.

CD: Yes.

WN: Why did you do that?

CD: Eager beaver again. (Chuckles) Teaching is important, but teaching was not the most important, in my opinion at that time. I deny that now. I think the teacher is the key person. But the fact [is] that society gives a higher salary to the principal and encourages people to move to positions like that. I think ideally they should all be based on the kind of contribution that they can make, rather than their status in the school. A teacher can very often be a much more important influence in the school than the principal can be. But that's society, so I was caught up with that idea that, well, if I want to advance, I've got to be a principal. I failed the principal's exam first, but I then passed it the second time and was appointed principal at Pāhala. I was there for six years, from 1932 to 1938.

That was really my [first] movement toward school administration. It was not really a

developmental period in terms of ideas about education as I understand them now. But it did give me experience working with teachers, working with students in a rural community, and making administrative decisions. (I thought) six years was long enough to be there, so I asked for another appointment. I had (completed) my master's degree at the University of Hawai'i [in 1935]. While I was (at Pāhala), I did a study on how a principal conducts school administration [while] also being a part-time teacher, which I was. I was teaching part-time and [being] an administrator part-time.

WN: Well, you know, you were a teacher all this time in Kona Waena and other places, then you came to Pāhala as a principal. Now, it seems like now the shoe is on the other foot. You're now, more or less, a supervisor of these teachers.

CD: Right.

WN: Did your relations change at all, or did your views toward teaching change at all?

CD: As far as my view toward teaching is concerned, I don't think it changed too much. But throughout my career—and that's one of the reasons why I decided teaching was my way of life—I felt that interacting with people and encouraging them—not ordering them—was the best way. So I carried that idea on in my principalship.

For instance, it had been the policy at Pāhala Elementary School [that] the teachers every Friday afternoon turned in their plan books for the principal to see. This is a carryover from the [idea] that the principal is the one [who] knows what to do and therefore has to approve. Well, I continued that practice. I was kind of shocked when I went to the next school, which I'll discuss with you, and found that they didn't do that. They didn't ask for those things. But my approach was, I will examine what you are doing, and if I have suggestions, I will make them. Otherwise, I will simply initial and that's all. But very often I would make suggestions which may or may not have been good, as I look back on it now. But at least I took an idea of working closely with teachers, encouraging teachers, rather than belittling and undermining them.

We had a supervising principal [later called district superintendent] in each of these districts who was the overall administrator for the schools. The supervising principals we had at that time were taking quite a different point of view. One came in and went into a classroom. I felt that the teacher was a very poor teacher. He taught arithmetic at this time and English at this time, and he had the plans all worked out. I didn't try to stop him from that because I felt that was his way of working. But the supervising principal would come around and sometimes sit in the classrooms, the teacher told me afterwards. He and I had a very nice relationship, even though I didn't think he was doing a good job of teaching. I didn't come out and say he didn't. So the supervising principal said, "Let me take over your class." So he took over the class, and [the teacher] sat in the back of the room.

And [the teacher] told me afterwards, "He couldn't teach. He couldn't do as well as I did."

(Laughter)

CD: (As a) contrast, I don't know if you've ever heard the name Beatrice Carter. She became an

outstanding administrator. She was principal for years at a school over here in Kalihi. But she knew how to do things and would go in and help the teachers. Of course, she was quite a dictator, but on the other hand, teachers loved her because she was helping them. So my attitude then was to encourage and encourage, rather than to direct.

WN: Now, when you came in in 1932—I would imagine it might be kind of difficult for an administrator to come into a school. Teachers are already there, used to a certain system. How different was your system, compared to your predecessor, and how did the teachers accept it?

CD: You mean, how did I make it different? Well, here again, it follows just what I was saying. I took the point of view [that] this system has been developed over a period of years. I will not go in and simply change it. I will work along the lines of what I think is good, and I will encourage ideas that come from them that would help.

For instance, in those years, we gave an examination every year. It was really a testing program, testing all the kids. So I continued that throughout my time there. We'd give these (standardized) tests, and the teachers would use (the scores) in whatever way they could. But (the tests) never really (were) a great deal of help, because (they were) not the kind that the teachers could use very much (to help them understand their students).

At that time the University of Hawai'i [was] allowing people on the other islands to teach courses for the university. I decided that one way to help these teachers [and] encourage them to improve their teaching, is to set up a class. So we had about twenty teachers [at Pāhala Elementary], I think, about that time, [and] about eight or nine of them joined this class that I taught. We worked and developed a course of study for the school and ran it off on the mimeograph. (Chuckles) By the end of the school year, it was ready to use that following year. Well, as so often happens with that kind of thing, the teachers that developed it found it helpful, but the others didn't, and pretty soon it was forgotten at the school.

WN: Did you get any resistance from any teachers to implement some of these new ideas?

CD: Yes. But it was not a violent opposition, it was simply that, "Well, I don't see much value in that." So my point of view was, if I thought it was really important, I would try to work it in such a way that they would finally come around and say, "Yes, that is helpful." But otherwise, they could continue in their own way. In fact, most of their work was on the basis of what the teacher thought rather than what I thought about it.

WN: Now, how were your relations with the community of Pāhala?

CD: (Chuckles) My predecessor was considered a very capable principal. I'm not belittling her. Many of these things that she set up were things that I felt were good, even though I didn't particularly approve of the idea of [teachers] handing in their plan books every week. Theoretically, I didn't, but practically, I felt it was worth continuing.

In those days on the plantations—you may know this—a school in a plantation community was at the mercy of the (manager) of the plantation. This was certainly true at Pāhala. I was told when I went there, "Be sure to get to know [James C.] Campsie. Go down about seven

o'clock in the evening, and he may have time. He'll have finished dinner about that time, and he may be willing to see you."

So I went down about seven o'clock, shaking in my boots. (Chuckles) That was just a week or so after I arrived at Pāhala. The maid came to the door, and I told her who I was and why I was coming. So she went, came back in a little bit, and said, "Mr. Campsie will see you now."

So I went in and we just chatted informally. [Then] I said, "Well, as you probably know, I'm the new principal here, and I felt it was important to get acquainted with you." I said, "I would be very interested in your thoughts about the school." So we chatted on.

And one little incident. He started laughing. And he said, "You know, your predecessor, I didn't like some of the things she was doing, so I shut off the water at her school." He would only let the school have water at certain times. The principal came down and said, "We can't even take baths." And he's laughing. (Chuckles)

But we had no problems along that line. I watched all the p's and q's. As I say, you were at the mercy of the plantation manager. For instance, if we would need something for the school, why, I would go down and say, "We need this. We'd sure like to have some dirt moved from here and here." Or something like that. Or, "What about this?"

And he would say, "Sure, okay." And he'd send a truck up, whatever it was, and take care of it.

An interesting contrast to that is that in 1983 or so, after I had started working on this book, I [went to] Pāhala and asked the principal, "We were very dependent on the plantation manager (in the 1930s). How is it now?"

[He said that today], no relationship (existed) along that line at all. When the union [International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union] (represented the laborers), the separation was made. "We don't ask for anything. If there's something that we can do cooperatively, fine." For instance, (in 1983 when I visited there they had) macadamia nuts. And the plantation was having trouble [harvesting] (them). So the principal cooperated in getting the kids to sign up to go and pick up [i.e. harvest] macadamia nuts for the plantation. "But we don't ask for any favors or anything like that, because that's entirely changed."

During my 1932 to '38 time, we got cooperation [at Pāhala]. The plantation manager [Campsie] called one day, and he said, "How would you like to have a gymnasium for your school?" Elementary schools didn't have gymnasiums. But one or two schools that were relating to the community did.

I said, "Oh, sure. It'd be a good idea."

He said, "Come down tomorrow afternoon, and we'll go to the [Hawai'i County] Board of Supervisors and we'll see if we can get a gymnasium." We did. (Chuckles) We got the . . .

WN: Now, in those days, you worked with the county? The schools were run by the counties at



that time?

CD: No, the schools were run by the [territory of Hawai'i] school department. But the maintenance and the buildings were developed through the county. In many cases the legislature had to appropriate money for it, but the county had the power to (use the money). Years later that [power] was taken away from the county.

WN: Were you involved in changing the name of that school at all?

CD: Pāhala? Well, not particularly. I think those things developed. It's a school-community kind of thing in a little community like that. I was involved in this—before I left in 1938 they added a ninth grade, and then the following year they were going to add the tenth grade and get a high school department. That started evolving while I was there, but the next principals were the ones that really followed up in getting that done, because (it wasn't) declared a high school until after I left.

WN: And then it [eventually] became Ka'ū High and [Pāhala] Elementary School.

CD: Yes, right.

WN: Now, as principal at Pāhala, did you really feel that you were in charge or you were calling the shots, making the decisions, or was there someone higher up making decisions for you regarding, say, budget and spending?

CD: Oh. That's another aspect. Even up to the present time—and here comes this whole school/community-based management [concept]. Even up to the present time, the local community has very little to say about the specific things that will actually be allowed for that school. They can make recommendations, and we would make recommendations, but we had to do it [within] the whole pattern of the district and the state. Budgets were done, [but] we simply made recommendations to the central office here in Honolulu for what we wanted. Then they would lump all those [recommendations] from all the schools and decide what (money) should be (requested from the legislature). So later we would find out, well, you got this and you got this, but you didn't get this and you didn't get this.

The selection of teachers was the same way. We could say, well, I need a teacher for music who can teach vocal music and band and also teach social studies. The personnel department would decide, well, this teacher will fit that pretty well. So the next thing you knew, this teacher is appointed here. So it was a matter of asking our opinion, but we didn't make the decision. It was made by the central office and the school board or the legislature or the governor. In other words, it was not within our—even the selection of teachers was not really our final authority.

WN: And that's continued then, similar, up until maybe recently, when school-based management . . .

CD: Yes. And more and more, the school has something to say about it. And of course, the [Hawai'i State] Teachers [Association] (was organized) in 1970 (and they are involved in decisions regarding the schools).

WN: Now, while you were at Pāhala there was a change in the superintendent, from Will Crawford to Oren E. Long, 1934.

CD: Yes.

WN: Did you notice any changes in the overall picture at that time?

CD: Not particularly, because those two had worked closely together for a number of years, and their point of view was very much the same.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay. We were talking about Oren E. Long.

CD: Oren E. Long had many fine qualities. He was a person who worked along the line that I am discussing here. He encouraged the McKinley High School program. He encouraged all of us to use our own ideas and work in such a way that we work cooperatively with people. His predecessor, Will Crawford, was that way, too. But Will Crawford was a more formal-type person. I met Will Crawford and became acquainted with him, but I never had a personal relationship with him. Of course, I was new at that time, before he left. But I'm sure Will Crawford had something to do with my appointment at Pāhala, because I was appointed there around that time. But it was only a distant kind of relationship. Oren Long became a personal friend, and we related very well together.

WN: Also during that time you started taking courses at the UH [University of Hawai'i].

CD: Yes. All along at this time, even at Kona Waena when I was there, they allowed us to take what they called reading courses. You could sign up for a course to read certain books and then report on those books. So I did that with a couple of courses. Of course, each summer I would go (to Honolulu) and take courses, so that by 1935 I had accumulated enough credits [for] my master's degree in education.

WN: Now, did you feel at that time that a master's degree was imperative? Did you need the master's degree?

CD: Only for my personal. . . . It didn't matter to the school department much. You had to have a bachelor's. That was your jumping-off place. If you went beyond that, it was up to you.

WN: Could a normal school graduate become a principal?

CD: For elementary schools. But most of the normal school graduates who went into administration went on and got their bachelor's degrees. Some of them even their master's.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: We were talking about your master's degree.

CD: We were encouraged to do that, but it didn't make any difference in our pay or anything. It may have helped me get an advanced professional degree certificate. That probably did help me get that, but that was the highest certificate I could get as a regular teacher. I never got any higher than that, even though I got more credits and a doctoral degree afterwards.

WN: Now, while you were going to the UH, I guess you were exposed to Benjamin Wist at that time?

CD: Sure. Ben and I became good friends, and I took some of his classes. I could quote all day the different stories that he would tell.

WN: Now, was Ben Wist's philosophy similar to Miles Cary's philosophy?

CD: Yes, except Ben Wist was more of a . . . In our book we use the words passive and active person. Miles Cary was an active school man in terms of pushing his ideas. Ben Wist was active, too, but Miles Cary led out and pushed his ideas and involved people to do it. Ben Wist would tend to be a little less aggressive that way and would tend to give in to the community, for instance, much more than Miles Cary would. So Ben Wist had a much better reputation in the community. He was elected to the state constitutional convention, you remember, back in 1950 and so on. But as far as pushing social issues and what is best for kids and the community, Miles Cary was very different from Ben Wist, even though Ben Wist would discuss those things, too. My own opinion. Others may not agree with me, but my opinion is that he [Wist] didn't press those things in an active way.

WN: Was Cecil Dotts active or passive?

CD: (Chuckles) That's where my eager beaver expression comes in. I was active in terms of moving [into] what I thought was a higher position and supposedly getting more influence. But I think I tended to be more passive in terms of social issues and improving society and so on. Whereas Miles Cary, I admired him at the time, and I still admire him. I feel I didn't see those things clearly enough. Even as I started writing this book, I didn't feel that I understood those things clearly enough to be an active person and thinker. I think I'm nearer to that now after eight years of working on the book than I was before because of the interaction we've had, not only the co-author [Mildred Sikkema] and I working together, but with others that I've talked with.

Arthur Kaneshiro is a good illustration of the kind of person [whom] I think is an active thinker and person. How well he's going to do this in this school/community-based management [coordinator] job he has, I don't know. But I think he's that kind of a thinker.

WN: One more question before we leave Pāhala. You know, coming into a school, a plantation community, the kids are probably—the majority of them, would be Japanese or Filipino, or non-*Haole* anyway. The teachers, would you agree, would they be the same way, mostly non-*Haole*?

CD: About half of the teachers were. Well, I guess not quite half at that time. Because there was

still a carryover of these people that had come in from the Mainland. We had, for instance, Aurelia Martinez—Spanish background, but she was considered *Haole*. Whereas, Mae Murakawa is of Japanese ancestry. Those two were outstanding people, (with) different ethnic backgrounds.

WN: Did you feel any kind of discomfort coming into that kind of a situation?

CD: No, I don't think so. Because, this was my fifth year of school work, and I was pretty familiar with working with different people. Kona Waena was, I guess, more local people than Mainland people, so that by that time, I had learned to work with all different ethnic groups fairly well, I think.

WN: What was your philosophy in terms of pidgin English, for example?

CD: Now or then?

WN: Then.

CD: Then. Well, it was still a matter of teaching the subjects, but trying to make those subjects real to us. So that's why, in teaching English, we actually put on this play. I felt that [they were] getting not only the English but getting these kids experiences of working together and creating their own script. They read *Midsummer's Night Dream* and interpreted it in their own words. So this was a breakaway from the actual traditional kind of thing. But typically, I would try to get them to learn grammar. In fact, throughout my philosophy in no sense do I belittle the teaching of subjects. I think we have to learn. The kids need to know how to read and write and speak and do mathematics and so on. But they need to do that in a different kind of environment than we were doing in those earlier years.

WN: Okay. Well, then in 1938, after six years at Pāhala, you moved over to Kawānanakoa Experimental School. Now, was that part of your eager beaveriness again?

CD: (Laughs) Yes, I suppose so. But I had no idea that I might be appointed to Kawānanakoa. Because I had developed this course of study with our faculty at Pāhala, which had its good points, but it tended to be more of a traditional kind of course of study. But it was prepared on the basis of what our teachers [who] helped with it believed. So I think the way I was working with the faculty had some influence. And of course, by that time I was quite well acquainted with the administration of the [territorial] school department. So I think they felt I was the best possible candidate for Kawānanakoa. But when we come to discuss Kawānanakoa a little bit more, I can say I think that was a sad (chuckles) thing. I enjoyed my three-and-a-half years there [1938–41]. I felt I made a contribution, but it was not the contribution that Kawānanakoa needed, as I'll tell you a little while later.

WN: Can you define experimental for me? What did they mean by that?

CD: George Axtelle was the theorist that developed it. The school department, as O. W. Robinson, who was deputy superintendent [of schools] around that time, said, "We gave them a free hand." In other words, whatever Kawānanakoa wanted, they could do. So George Axtelle worked with [Ephraim] Vern Sayers and with Ben Wist at the (normal school) and with



others, and set up Kawānanakoa. When Kawānanakoa was started in 1927, I believe, there was still a [Territorial] Normal [and Training] School. There wasn't any Teachers College [at the University of Hawai'i] at that time. Teachers College didn't start until 1932. So it was these people—the normal school people were part of the school department. So Vern Sayers and Ben Wist and others at the normal school worked closely with George Axtelle in developing this program.

To them, the experimental [concept] was a way of interpreting John Dewey's philosophy. This is the point of view that you don't start out with a set kind of thing. You meet with youngsters, you get acquainted with youngsters, and out of that relationship, the teachers and the youngsters work together [to] develop a program for the school. So that's what Kawānanakoa set out to do, in my interpretation of it. Of course, they had many problems in doing that.

WN: Now, was Miles Cary involved in setting up Kawānanakoa?

CD: No. But Miles Cary was sympathetic [toward] it. Kawānanakoa at that time was grades one to eight. McKinley High School was grades nine to twelve and then later became ten to twelve. And so Miles Cary saw the relationship there of whatever is done in the elementary school on an experimental basis should be carried on into the high school. That's what he was trying to do. In other words, he was trying to relate. In Miles Cary's dissertation he tells about how that continuity of thinking and working and relationships should carry right through the school grades. So that's what he tried to do. He tried to pick it up, and instead of applying it to the elementary level, why, he applied it to the senior high school where he was.

WN: And how were the students selected to go to Kawānanakoa? Was it a district thing where kids just went there because they lived in the district? Or was it more of a cross section or an admissions kind of thing?

CD: I've forgotten the specifics of how they selected. But if any parent wanted his kids to come to Kawānanakoa, I think he could at that time, although there were certain restrictions on that. For instance, one parent, even when I was there, moved into town and had the [children] stay with a relative and [come] to Kawānanakoa because they liked the program. On the other hand, they were not forced to go there. I think they started basically with the people [who] were living there. If they wanted to come to Kawānanakoa, they could. So basically it was the people in the community, with others being allowed to come in if they wished. Or anyone there who didn't like it could transfer out. Whereas with other schools, (the Department of Public Instruction) was much more strict. (Children) had to go to their particular [district] school unless they had a real important reason for not going to the school.

WN: Okay. Let's talk about your tenure as principal at that school.

CD: At Kawānanakoa? I was there for three-and-a-half years. Now, when you say tenure, are you referring to the program or . . .

WN: Well, you were telling me earlier that there were some problems, or you felt that you weren't the right person for the job. Can we talk about that?

CD: Yes, okay. What I meant by that was that school, in my opinion, as I look back on it now,

failed in the sense of continuing that point of view. George Axtelle and a person in the central office of the school department worked closely together—as well as the normal school people—to develop the program. They had classes for the teachers. The teachers were selected because they wanted to work in that kind of a school. If they didn't want to work in that school, they [could] move out and other teachers could come in. In fact, they would go out looking for people [who] were interested in that point of view to develop it.

And George Axtelle decided, for some reason, that he'd had enough time there—I think he was there for about three or four years at Kawānanakoa—and he went to New York or someplace for other activities. They selected Bob Faulkner, who lived here (at Arcadia) until just a few weeks ago when he died. He was ninety-seven. He was appointed principal. He was a very fine person and had good ideas about working together. In fact, his background was similar to mine, I think, of trying to work cooperatively with people and encouraging them. But as far as the theory of what George Axtelle and these others were trying to do, he did not have the background for that. I think he, himself, admitted it at the time. He was a capable person. He was recognized by the school department as a capable person, but he didn't have the theory to pick it up. So there tended to be a dropping of that point of view.

So that by the time I [went] there in 1938, the school was still carrying on in many ways similar to what Axtelle had encouraged and developed with them. But there's a study that you might like to look at if you ever get around to doing this kind of thing. Lida Haggarty wrote her master's degree [thesis] at the University of Hawai'i. (She completed) her master's degree on Kawānanakoa School (in 1938). When I came, (some of) the teachers were blasting (chuckles) that study. Lida Haggarty [wrote down] her interpretation of what the philosophy of Kawānanakoa School was. [Haggarty, Lida, *The Extent of Correlation Between Philosophy and Practice in the Rooms of the Kawānanakoa Intermediate School*, 1938.] Then she [circulated] that statement of philosophy to the teachers—I guess she asked all the teachers to cooperate, and most of them probably did—to indicate where they stood on that philosophy. She came up with the conclusion that, I think about a third of the teachers accepted that philosophy and were trying to act upon it. Another group, maybe another third, [were] using those things but not really following up. And then the rest were not paying any attention to it. In other words, there was not that evolvment which was assumed back in Axtelle's time, that if you keep working this way, you'll have an entire faculty [working] together on this point of view. So that when Bob Faulkner came in, he simply encouraged them. And that philosophy, I don't think, really flourished.

When I came in, I was the same way. I didn't understand the philosophy well enough. I had read some of Dewey's writings, and I knew something about it, but my own personal background was just not adequate for that kind of thing. What should have been done, as I look back on it now, if they wanted to continue that as an experimental school, it should have [had] leadership, and they should [have] set up conditions that would permit it. For instance, by the time I came there, we could not select our teachers. When a teacher wanted to come to Honolulu and Kawānanakoa was the only place to go and she had seniority, she came to Kawānanakoa if there was a vacancy there.

WN: Regardless of whether they subscribed to the theory or not.

CD: That's right. See, you might ask her, "Do you agree?"

"Oh, sure."

In the back of her mind, "I want to come to Honolulu." It was not an active kind of relationship. I can give you illustrations of what, I think, was excellent at the time [and what] has still carried over from that earlier theory. If you'd care to, I'll give you one right now.

WN: Sure.

CD: Kathryn Beveridge was one who had gone through this training with George Axtelle. At that time, they had the kids in one class with the teacher about half the day. This was eighth grade, I'm thinking about now. Then they would go out for shop, physical education, homemaking, music, and so on. So even if they didn't call it core studies, it was a group that was similar to what Miles Cary developed at McKinley. Kathryn Beveridge worked that way. She has written this up, by the way. We quoted her in writing of it.

An illustration of how that worked was this. I would visit these classes. That's one of the things I did as the principal. I would go around and just sit there. Or if the teacher wanted to come up and speak to me, fine. Otherwise, I'd just go on. So I was acquainted with the way they were working. One day a delegation of kids came to the office. The secretary allowed them to come (in to see me). They said, "Miss Beveridge is ill today. Please don't get us a substitute." They said, "We know what we're to do. We planned our work. We know how to carry on that work. Please, a substitute will be worse."

So I said, "Okay." Later in the day, I went there. You'd never know the teacher wasn't there.

(Laughter)

CD: (In an article she wrote in 1929, Beveridge described how she carried on her teaching. The students themselves made the decisions, not the teacher. The teacher sat in as an advisor, as a counselor, as a consultant. Of course, she was very important because she had the background and they didn't. But the whole thing was a student decision-making situation. So you could see why the kids didn't want a substitute coming in there. A substitute wouldn't have the slightest idea what they were doing and might not care. I can imagine the substitute coming in and saying, "Well, I don't know what you were doing here, but I'll have you do this." It would just upset their plans. So this is an illustration, then, of the so-called democratic process in operation.

Now, Kawānanakoa at that time was not able to relate to the community (very) well. We were encouraged to relate to the community, but it was very difficult to do that, because if people in the community don't have anything to say about what's going on in the school, they're not going to be very much interested. They'd come to PTA [Parent-Teacher Association] meetings, and we would have homeroom visits. And they'd come in and chat with the teacher. But it was more of a "Do I approve of what you're doing?" Or, "Is my child getting along all right in school?" That kind of relationship, rather than a cooperative kind of relationship. But Kathryn Beveridge was able to do many of these things.

I might say that the student council was a very important part of the school organization, and

we continued it while I was there. The student council would take up all kinds of things that related to school operations. They didn't get into the question of what goes on in the classroom, because that was the teacher's responsibility and they were working with the class to do that. But this was the overall relationship. By the way, Dan Akaka, who is now [U.S.] senator, was president of our student body when I was there.

Now, I can tell you how I came to leave Kawānanakoa, if you wish.

WN: Well, was it truly an experimental school, in retrospect?

CD: No, it was not truly an experimental school. Of course, all the time, just as Miles Cary had problems at McKinley relating his ideas, there were parents who just hated that school. "Why do I have to send my kid here? It's a waste of time. It's no good."

I said, "What is it you're opposed to?"

"I don't want my kid to be experimented with."

(Chuckles) So therefore, I asked the school department to drop that word. That's when I was the initiator of changing [the name] from Kawānanakoa Experimental to Kawānanakoa Intermediate. Schools (with grades seven to nine) were called intermediate [by] that time.

WN: Would you say that that's the predecessor of the University Lab School?

CD: No, I don't think that would be a fair comparison. Because the University Lab School was set up as a training program for teachers. Kawānanakoa did cooperate, and they'd help to train the teachers. And they continued that even when I was there. We were very glad to do it. I sat in with university classes, talked about it, and discussed it. But it was a different kind of setup. The University Lab School was set up at that time—it's not that way now—but they were set up definitely at that time to prepare teachers, give them actual experience with experimental ideas.

WN: Okay. Let's talk about why you left [in] 1941.

CD: The war broke out. I had no plans to leave or anything. I would have been glad to stay on and keep working (there). I was trying to develop my own ideas along these lines of experimental work throughout this time. But when the war (started many) things changed. Schools (were) closed, as you know, for about (eight) weeks, December and January. By the time it had opened, many of the teachers had either gone into the service or had quit jobs and gone into defense work or something like that. The district office in Honolulu needed another person to work there. And Bob Faulkner, who had been the principal at Kawānanakoa, knew me well, and asked for me to do that. So, here again, that's a new experience for me, so I accepted the appointment.

By June another (change) came about. The supervising principal in charge of the West Hawai'i schools wanted to come to Honolulu. He had been there long enough [to] develop some antagonism in the community (and he decided it was time for a change). I was asked, then, if I would be willing to take charge of that (district). My wife and I, since we'd lived



six years at Pāhala, didn't mind it, and, here again, here's another opportunity for me. So I accepted.

In the meantime—just a little personal (item) here—I asked Mr. Long, while these other teachers and principals were going into the service, “I’m wondering whether I shouldn’t volunteer to go into the service, because it’s the loyal thing to do.”

He said, “How much experience have you had in (anything related to the military)?”

I said, “Absolutely none.” I hadn’t any relationship whatever, whereas some of the people were reserve officers and some of them (had been) in junior ROTC [Reserve Officers’ Training Corps] classes and so on.

He said, “Then we need you here.”

That’s when I was kept on, then, to be in charge over in West Hawai’i.

WN: You became supervising principal of the West Hawai’i [school] district.

CD: Right.

WN: What did that entail?

CD: That meant twenty-two schools at that time, from Kapāpala, right above Pāhala to Makapala, north of Hawi on the north side. So all of West Hawai’i had these twenty-two schools. I was in charge of those.

WN: So supervising principal, is that one notch below the district superintendent?

CD: No. There weren’t any district superintendents at that time. The supervising principal at that time was one notch below the territorial office. In other words, we were directly responsible to the superintendent [of schools] in the central office. For instance, in California, a supervising principal, who would be called a superintendent there, was responsible to a board of education. Well, we didn’t have a [Hawai’i County] board of education. So we were responsible to the superintendent who worked with the [territorial] board of education. We didn’t have any direct relationship to the board of education, (but I worked closely with the board member in West Hawai’i. We could) recommend things from the district. But after a teacher was appointed to West Hawai’i, then that (person) was under my supervision as West Hawai’i supervising principal. In other words, my job was to relate to the communities and the district, get along with (and inform the) school board member and relate to (the schools and) the central office. Those were the main responsibilities.

WN: What about budget? Any kind of doling out of money to schools?

CD: I would work with the schools, but the budget people in the central office would contact the schools directly. I would be informed about those things, but they didn’t contact me for a budget. They would contact me for the budget for my office, but that’s all. (Chuckles) And I could be involved in the discussion, [why] this school wants this when this one doesn’t get it?

I can be involved in that kind of discussion, but the [final] decision was made by the central office, not by me. But after the money is allocated, then if there came questions, then that would (usually involve) me. That's where the word supervising principal came in. I was responsible for supervising what went on there [but] not making all the decisions.

WN: So you were, in essence, what today is called the district superintendent?

CD: Yes, that's right. But (over the years) district superintendents took on more (responsibilities) than I had at that time.

WN: So how many people were in your office?

CD: My secretary and me.

WN: Really? Wow.

CD: We had a little room on the Kona Waena campus, right on the edge of the campus. And that was the supervising principal's office. My home was in Captain Cook, right near Kealahou. So this secretary handled all the business affairs and all the secretarial work (of my office). Of course, we worked very closely together on all these things. Others would relate to us—in other words, school principals—but at that time, we had no other staff when I was there.

WN: Did you have meetings? Did all twenty-two principals meet with you regularly?

CD: No, we would meet sometimes in sections. (Distances were too great for them all to meet together). There were teacher association (meetings in the different sections). We would always, of course, be involved in those, but we had no administrative relationships (to them).

WN: You must have been on the road quite a bit then?

CD: Yes. (Chuckles) And during the war, we had to ration our gasoline. I still remember, one of the very weak principals calling me. "I have problems over here. Can you come over?"

I said, "Gosh, the gasoline rationing, I don't know whether I can come or not. Can we talk about it over the phone?"

Well, that was the wrong thing to do. Here was a weak principal calling for help and I turned her down. But that was the kind of pressure we were under. You can't just keep driving all the time.

WN: I guess at that time, then, your immediate boss was Oren E. Long.

CD: That's right. He was superintendent up until I left the Big Island [Long retired as superintendent in 1946].

WN: Did you do any kind of lobbying at all at that time?

CD: Well, indirectly, yes. See, lobbying in this sense, that if we knew the people of the legislature

at that time. I was not much [into] that kind of thing. Some of the other school people were very strong at that. Shigeo Yoshida, for instance. I don't know if you ever heard that name, but he died three or four years ago. But Shigeo and some of the other principals were in there actively working with the politicians to get this, and get this, and get this. My lobbying was more in terms of relating to them, but not really trying to pressure them into things.

WN: Was the school system politicized back then?

CD: In this sense, if the principal felt that this school should have a new building or a certain teacher or something else for the school, then (sometimes) the principal would go to his legislator or go to the board member in the district and push for it. Many of the principals (and some teachers) would actually do it. [When] they felt that these buildings are old and they should be taken care of or replaced, they'd go out and work with the people in order to get the legislature to appropriate money specifically for that particular school. (At) Pāhala, for instance, the plantation manager James Campsie was willing to work with (us). That (may be) how we got the [high] school, (ahead of some other areas).

WN: Did you have any direct relationship with some of the very charismatic legislators of the Big Island at that time, namely [William] "Doc" Hill, Julian Yates, I would think . . .

CD: Julian, yes. Julian [represented] West Hawai'i. Julian and I would have talks quite often. In fact, sometimes when I'd go down to Mr. Campsie's (home), here was Julian Yates there, too. So the three of us talked together.

WN: I see.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 21-15-3-91

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Cecil K. Dotts (CD)

March 19, 1991

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Cecil Dotts on March 19, 1991, at his home in Makiki, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay. Let's get started for our third interview session with Cecil Dotts. Now, we left back in 1946 when you started [in] Honolulu. Can you tell me how you got that position?

CD: (It would be a long story to go into detail on how I became director of secondary education and what happened when I worked in the central office of the Department of Public Instruction for the next years, so let me hit the highlights as briefly as I can. World War II was over. Much had changed in Hawai'i since December 7, 1941. When the bombs dropped on Pearl Harbor not everything stopped in the school department but for a few weeks efforts were directed toward assisting in the war.

(Miss Elizabeth Collins had been working with the schools and had just completed a community survey of the public schools which had been requested by the Hawai'i legislature [Collins, Elizabeth, *Community Survey of Education in Hawai'i*, 1942]. In spite of war conditions she was able to get her report printed and distributed to the schools. But school people were too busy with other things to do much about it during the war. Miss Collins was not idle. The school department employed her to work with the schools as a consultant so she worked directly with the schools helping them follow up on things she believed important. She came to West Hawai'i and worked with us there for a short time.

(The powers of the Hawai'i legislature were greatly limited during martial law, but it was permitted to hold sessions. Some legislators, ignoring the Collins survey, demanded that the school department be investigated. This led to what we called the Draper-Hayden survey [Draper, Edgar and Alice H. Hayden, *Preliminary Report on the Curriculum Survey of the Public Schools of the Territory of Hawai'i*], published in 1945.

(By 1946 things had begun to happen in the school department. Changes were being made following up on the surveys. Partly because of reduced enrollment, more money was being given to the schools and new positions were being set up to carry out recommendations of the surveys. A director of kindergartens was appointed and some money was given to start a few kindergartens. Offices and directors for each of the following were established: pupil



guidance, elementary education, adult education, and secondary education.

(Another recommendation of the surveys was that administration of the schools needed changes. One change was to organize the Big Island of Hawai'i into one district instead of three. I was interested in the position of director of secondary education and applied for it. I was appointed, thus making it possible to combine East and West Hawai'i. When the supervising principal of Central Hawai'i retired the island became one district under a district superintendent.)

My job as director of secondary education [1946-56] was to work with all the intermediate schools, that's grades seven, eight, and nine and the high schools. Just before I started the job in 1946, the school board had said that they needed something more definite about what the secondary schools are supposed to be doing. So almost immediately I set up a committee to work with me in developing a more definite program. Nothing like that had been prepared for many years. I think way back in the twenties, something similar to that had been published.

(Over a period of several weeks) we prepared what we called a program of studies. We involved principals (and others as we worked on it). Then after about a year we sent it out to the schools as a temporary program of studies to be used by them in planning their program for the following year. After it was used for a year, it was revised further and then adopted by the school board as the program of studies. That served as the guide for what the secondary schools were supposed to be doing. It was not revised until about 1958. In other words, for about ten years it was the guide. Then it was revised some. In fact, it has changed considerably (but still is basically similar to what we developed in 1948).

During this period when I was director of secondary education, I had thought of (getting more professional preparation for my job, and possibly completing the requirements for a doctorate). I had been taking courses ever since 1930. I decided to take a year off. (Sabbaticals were not available so) I had to go without pay to do the graduate study. I didn't go (expecting) to get a doctorate degree but went with the idea that it may be possible because (of the credits I had) accumulated. As time went on, I saw more and more the possibility that I might complete all the requirements during the two summers and the school year. So I completed my doctorate in August 1949 [from New York University] (and the degree was granted in October 1949).

(While I had been away there were more changes in the DPI. The deputy superintendent for instruction—my boss—had retired and Dr. Deal Crooker was appointed in his place. Deal was a dynamic leader and even as I returned he had started having meetings of the four professional people under his supervision and inviting to the meetings the guidance director, health director and others related to our work in curriculum.

(So this was an entirely new way of working and I was able to make use of my year away by interacting with the others. Many things evolved as we worked together. We involved the district office people, the building and business planning people and even the community.)

WN: You know, as director of secondary education, were your duties primarily content, what is actually to be taught in the schools, or were your duties more administrative, dealing with personnel and so forth? In other words, who in the DOE [DPI] hierarchy actually decided

what is to be taught in the high schools?

- CD: The program of studies that we developed actually determined what was to be taught. But that's generally. In other words, do you teach one year of math, or do you teach two years of math, or three years of math? What about science? What about English? What about social studies? Our committee developed all those into a program of studies that said in the seventh grade you teach this, eighth grade you teach this, and so on. Now, we had an exception procedure, because we emphasized that we weren't trying to dictate to the schools what they [had to] do. But we felt that the school board had wanted something more definite, and we made it definite with the privilege of making changes. (That is, we respected the ability of schools to provide a good educational program consistent with the overall program of studies.)

There was quite a bit of controversy, because here, all the time, we had been encouraging schools to take their own initiative and develop their own programs. And now we (appeared to be saying), you have to do it this way, and this way, and this way. But our response [to schools] was, "Ask for an exception." (Many of them) didn't want to ask for an exception, so they tended to follow it just the way we had worked it out, which was unfortunate. The fact that it remained as the guide for ten years without any change indicated that there wasn't very much unhappiness about it. The schools began to adjust to that, and they (tried to use it constructively).

They would ask for an exception if they had reason. For instance, that didn't worry McKinley High School. (They had been showing for years what a faculty could do in working together to provide a meaningful program with students), practically what we were saying. I think Miles Cary probably felt that it [program of studies] wasn't too much help to him, but at least it didn't block him in what (they were doing).

- WN: So in other words, on one hand, you were making policy in terms of content and so forth. And yet, on the other hand, you were encouraging schools to take their own initiative, sort of a pre-school/community-based management. How did you deal with that? Isn't that sort of contrary?

- CD: I dealt with it by being on call to any secondary school that wished to have me discuss. That was emphasized, that I was on call to come and talk with them about it. On the other hand, if they didn't call—the line of least resistance in some cases was not to call. This was the unfortunate thing about it. But in meetings we would stress the importance of considering this program of studies as something that is to be a guide, a help to you, and not a mandate for you to carry out.

For instance, Maui High School's principal, Malcolm Clower, who later became a district superintendent, was a go-getter. So he asked for my help. I would go over and stay on Maui for maybe a week at a time and meet with him and with some teachers. He would arrange meetings. So that he had a feeling then that he is working closely with (the school department). He was quite positive in his ideas, so we didn't always agree. But I wasn't coming there to tell him, you can't do it this way. But I would try to react with him on how he might do it.

WN: Now, did the DOE and the district superintendent go along with you in this kind of, you know, encouragement of schools to take initiative? In other words, was it like a policy type of thing or was it you, a lone wolf in the woods, advocating this kind of thing?

CD: (The school department operated on the basis of what is sometimes called "line" and "staff." Line officers were those administratively responsible for what was going on in the schools: the superintendent, the district superintendent, and the principal. Staff officers were those who worked specifically with the programs in the schools: subject area specialists, director of programs, etc. As director of secondary education I was a staff officer. As supervising principal I had been a line officer.

(Effective operation of the schools requires that line and staff people work well together—that staff people be expert in their respective programs and be respected by line officers as having important things to contribute to the educational program and that line people be open to new ideas and not use their authority to block staff people. This is a very important human relations concept, not only in school administration but in business, military and other situations in which people work together. It seems to have worked well in the Persian Gulf War, but undoubtedly there were more problems than what the tight communications control has permitted us to know. The free flow of information today about the operation of the U.S. Congress and the presidency illustrates how difficult it is to work democratically.)

I often use the word *laissez-faire* (meaning "let alone," let people do what they think best). I think the school administration tended at that time to be somewhat *laissez-faire*. (We were encouraged to go ahead and just keep them informed.) Some principals (tended to ignore what I was doing. Others tended to follow it as a mandate.)

As I look back on it now, that tended to be more of a *laissez-faire* kind of administration. There wasn't anyone in the school department at that time, in my opinion, who was "out front," leading the way. Miles Cary was out front as far as his school was concerned. He knew what he wanted to do. He worked with the school department. He worked in cooperation with the superintendent. He worked in cooperation with the community. And so he was moving ahead. He was doing the kind of thing that I think the superintendent should have been doing. (Superintendent Long retired in 1946 about the time I became director of secondary education. He had been very capable in many ways but he was not giving the kind of leadership I am discussing. His office) was short staffed. They had so many responsibilities. Being a centralized school system, the superintendent would very often get calls from parents (or they would) come into his office. So he had to spend time on things that really don't make a difference as far as kids are concerned.

WN: So who set the tone? You said *laissez-faire*. Who would set the tone for this type of environment? Was it the board of education? Was it the state superintendent usually?

CD: I think the state superintendent would, I think, yes. But that was again a cooperative kind of arrangement. The superintendent would meet with the school board. The school board would say, this is what should be done. The superintendent would advise with them. The superintendent would meet with administrators. So it was a cooperative kind of thing. But the different superintendents were different in their approach.



[W.] Harold Loper succeeded Oren Long as superintendent [in 1946 until 1953]. Harold Loper was much more specific in his [style] of leadership. But there were other things. Politics got in his way. He ran for delegate to Congress, took time off from his superintendent's job to run, and lost. But he finally decided that things weren't working right for him. Clayton Chamberlain had been appointed temporarily superintendent [in September 1952]. And when he [Loper] came back from his politics, he soon decided that he'd better resign. So he resigned. And then Clayton Chamberlain was appointed [in March 1953].

Clayton Chamberlain was a very different kind of person. He was a swell guy, a very easy person to work with. We all called him Clayton, a very friendly kind of relationship. Whatever you did was all right, unless it conflicted with something. (Chuckles) I was sitting in my office one time working on something. And here Clayton Chamberlain walked in (and sat down). His office was just down (the hall). He said, "What about this, what you said about the school department?"

I said, "What are you talking about?"

He said, "You criticized the school department over the air."

I said, "Clayton, what are you talking about?"

Someone had told him that I had said something that was really detrimental to the school department. I said, "I don't know what you're talking about, Clayton. If you can tell me what it is, let me know, but I sure don't know of anything that I said against the school department."

"Okay, Cecil, thank you."

That was over. It ended right there. In other words, that was the kind of confidence we had in (each other. And that is a very important qualification for a leader.) But as far as taking initiative on things, he was probably one of the weakest superintendents. At that time Deal Crooker had been brought in by Harold Loper to be deputy superintendent for curriculum and instruction. Deal Crooker was just the opposite from Clayton. He took the initiative, and he pushed ahead. So he would go and tell Clayton, "Let's do this. Let's do this. Let's do this," (and very often it was done).

That's how the Odell survey [Odell, William R., et al., *Organization and Administration of the Public Schools, Territory of Hawaii: Report*, 1957] came about. Another person and I were concerned about [how] things were going, a laissez-faire administration. And this other person, Lawrence Kasdon, who had just completed his doctorate at Stanford University, said, "Why doesn't the school department get the Odell people (at Stanford) to come and make a survey of the school department?" We talked about that, and pretty soon we decided to go in and talk with Deal Crooker, because he would be the one who would take the initiative on it. We (were on Deal's staff). To make a long story short, (Deal said), "Sounds like a good idea." In a few weeks, the whole thing had gone to the school board, and they had appropriated enough money for Odell to bring a staff over here and work for a year to evaluate the school department. So this is the way the process was working. (I was selected as coordinator of the Odell survey, serving as liaison between the school department and the



Odell survey staff. I took a year's leave [1956-57] from my secondary education job.) I had no administrative responsibility, but I kept in close touch with the Odell survey. They asked me to come over for a month to Stanford where they had their headquarters to work with them while they developed their materials. So that was for just one year.

WN: So, you're saying then that the superintendent, really, was the one who set the tone and not the board of education or the governor?

CD: It depended. If the superintendent was doing what the board thought should be done, he set the tone. If the superintendent was not doing what they wanted, the (board might take the initiative or try to get a new superintendent). So it had to be a cooperative kind of relationship. And Clayton Chamberlain was very good at having a (friendly) relationship with everyone. The final decision makers were the school board. But it (usually came through) these channels before they would consider it.

WN: Now, what about Walton [M.] Gordon? In '59 Walton Gordon took over as superintendent. What kind of an administrator was he?

CD: He was much more specific. He was much more direct. He'd been the principal of several schools. He had come from the principalship of Farrington High School shortly before that. When the school department was reorganized and made into one district for the whole island [of O'ahu], Walton Gordon was district superintendent. And I was deputy to him [in 1958]. He was chosen from district superintendent to become the superintendent in 1959.

I had been in the position of director of secondary education from 1946 (and when the position of deputy superintendent for O'ahu schools became available I decided) that it was a good idea to shift. Mr. Faulkner was retiring. Charles Barrett was selected to head the district. I was asked to be the deputy district superintendent to Mr. Barrett. That only lasted a fairly short period of time (when there were other reorganizations).

(We should keep in mind that I am discussing a period of great change for Hawai'i. We became a state in 1959. The Democratic Party under Jack Burns had gained control of the governorship [in 1962] and the legislature and they had great ideas about bringing about improvements, including improvements in public education. Studies were carried out, some of them affecting the schools.

(So from 1958 to 1966 I had different titles depending upon the organization: deputy district superintendent for O'ahu schools, elementary supervising principal for Honolulu elementary schools, and finally deputy district superintendent for all Honolulu schools.

(During the school year 1965-66, Hawai'i was very short of teachers. Along with four others, I was asked to spend five weeks in the western United States recruiting teachers.) So two of us, Barton Nagata from Kaua'i and I, worked together to visit people in Nevada, (Colorado), Nebraska, and Kansas. That (schedule) had all been planned by the personnel office. What we had to do was to take our list and go to this particular teachers' college or university college of education and interview people. That was an interesting experience because it gave me a feeling of what was going on around the Mainland.

Shortly after I came back, the University [of Hawai'i] College of Education had been quite interested in what was going on in the school department. Some of the people—for instance, Lowell [D.] Jackson [then chairman of the UH College of Education's Department of Educational Administration] was an advisor for the senate education committee of the legislature. So, to make a long story short, Lowell Jackson was asked to apply for [position of state schools] superintendent. [R.] Burl Yarberry was [then the] superintendent. You've already talked with him, I believe. According to Lowell Jackson, the governor was very unhappy with Burl Yarberry. At least that was Lowell Jackson's point of view. You may have gotten another view, because I've talked with Burl along this line, too. But anyway, [Governor John A.] "Jack" Burns, according to Lowell Jackson—by the way, this is in the oral history in case you have any reason to review it. So this is a reference in case you have any reason to look at it. It's in the oral history up there [i.e., John A. Burns Oral History Project, housed at UH]. This is [Lowell Jackson's] oral history.

According to Lowell Jackson, the governor was very unhappy about Burl Yarberry and so he asked Jackson to take over as superintendent. It used to be, before that time, that the governor selected the superintendent. But at that time, the law had been changed and the superintendent was selected by the school board, not the governor. But you know something about politics. The governor decided he didn't want Yarberry in there. Even though he had no authority, he decided to insist that Jackson be the superintendent [in 1966]. A considerable controversy developed out of this, but the board selected Lowell Jackson as the superintendent [in 1966]. So, of course, immediately Burl Yarberry submitted his resignation. I don't know whether he mentioned this or not in his interview, but he was very unhappy with this whole situation. But that's another matter.

Anyway, in that whole process, they needed a person to replace Jackson at the university, because they were training teachers up there for principalships. Since I had had this experience, quite varied, and had a doctor's degree, why, I was asked if I would be willing to accept it. And I thought, well, here is a good change near the end of my career, because I was nearing retirement. So I said, "Yes, I'd be interested."

WN: This was back in 1966?

CD: That was in 1966, right. That was not long after I had returned from recruiting teachers up there. I took over that summer to work [as chair of the Department of Educational Administration] at the university. That was only for one year, because Lowell Jackson resigned [as state schools' superintendent] after about eleven months [1966-67]. So it was a one-year appointment for me. I had taken a leave from the school department [and was] to go back to my position as supervising principal.

But another job opened up there [at the university]. The United States government was setting up a teacher corps program to prepare teachers to work in low-income areas. Teachers need special abilities to work with kids that are alienated against school conditions. They [students] were dropping out of school or weren't learning well. The whole plan was to select (prospective) teachers [who] had not had teacher training. Another factor in this teacher corps program was that, just as we went to the Mainland to get teachers, other school systems were looking for them, too. So this teacher corps [program] was to increase the supply of teachers, because they were needed. So, to make a long story short, again, I was put in as director of

this program for two years at the university.

Then after that ended, again, I was still permitted to go back to the school department. But there was a possibility of establishing a second teacher corps program. This first one was in Honolulu, and that was quite practical for me. The second one, which was finally approved—and I was put in as director of it—was out in the Wai'anae area. This turned out to be more of a problem than I really wanted to do, because I was nearing retirement, and I was driving thirty-five miles each way to Wai'anae. My office was out there. At the end of the one year I decided I'd better drop out. I was eligible for retirement, so I'd better just retire and let someone else take over. So that ended my relationship with both the school department and the university.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay. Well, you are retired. Give me your assessment today of the DOE in light of your life experiences with the department. Or is that too general a question?

CD: No, that's all right. If you'd like for me to talk a little bit of my role in that, I'll be glad to do it at this point.

WN: Sure.

CD: As I look back on the school department, I think we can be very proud of the public school system right from the earlier times up to the present, because there have been many things that have been fine about the school department. The fact that we are a centralized school system makes it possible for a little, tiny community to get much more attention than it would if it had a local school board that had no power to get any money. Another fact is that one administration can look over the whole (state) and try to make the school system (function) well. In other words, every child in the Islands would have equal treatment. I quote that (statement) "equal treatment," because it actually hasn't worked that way in practice. I went into Miloli'i School when I was supervising principal [for West Hawai'i]—this was 1944—I found that they had books their kids were using that were published in 1900 or 1910, way back there, very old books. They just didn't have (more up-to-date books because money was) allotted on the basis of so much (per child), and they just didn't have enough money to buy books for all the kids.

In that sense, then, the centralized system was a hinderance. In my own opinion, there are very many more limitations to the centralized system. The main limitations are what we're trying to correct now through the Berman report [Berman, Weiler Associates/Hawai'i Business Roundtable, *The Hawaii Plan: Educational Excellence for the Pacific Era*, 1988] and through all our working together to give the local people and the local community more power on what happens to their schools. The actual administration of a school system on the Mainland is done by the local community. They have state offices (and sometimes county offices) on the Mainland, but they only have limited power.

WN: Now, you were saying on the Mainland, is that the rule?

CD: That's a typical kind of situation on the Mainland, that the local community operates the schools. What needs to be done here, in my opinion, is to have an arrangement in such a way that gives more power to the parents and the teachers and the administrators in the local communities.

For instance, here's an illustration. Mā'ili School here (on the Wai'anae Coast), has been (developing) school/community-based management for some time now. They came up with the idea of a four-day week. Why, in the old days, (it would be) crazy for anyone to bring up a thing like that. But now it is a legitimate question. So it's considered and thought about and it's going into effect. [Beginning with the 1991-92 school year, Mā'ili School operates on a four-day week.]

Another problem is that the money in a centralized system has tended to be distributed on a formula basis, as I mentioned earlier. If they're going to do something special, they (may) need special money. There ought to be a way to (provide) that. For a number of years now (the DOE has) been moving more and more in that direction. They've been setting up funds that could be used by individual schools without any control from anyone else. In other words, we're giving you this many dollars to use in whatever way you wish. Of course, there are some guidelines, but they're not required to follow a general formula.

And also, you've heard stories and seen articles in the paper about the budget being cut by the legislature. The school department should be given the privilege to choose the amount of money [it receives]. Go directly to the people and get approval from the people on this. That is probably not going to happen very soon in Hawai'i because the whole setup here is a centralized system, and turning the school completely over to the local community, [is thought by many to] be unwise. You may know that the Chicago schools did something like that just a year or two ago. And I understand that they're now going back to more of a [centralized] control. Because throwing too much to local people, if they don't have enough resources, (can lead to problems). What should be available is that a centralized system can provide consultant help. They can spend money for certain things. They can provide services that can't be provided locally. But the actual control as to what the kids will do in the school should be left to the actual local school group.

There have been many attempts along the lines that I'm just talking about. I may have mentioned this earlier, that Henry Townsend in 1896 to 1900 was in charge of the public schools before we became a territory. He was working in such a way that the teachers would have many more things that they could decide without interference from others. A local school community can say, "Now, we think subjects—math, science, and so on—are important." Everyone seems to agree on that nowadays, as they have for years. But in order to have that work well, we have to have students work in such an environment that everyone works on a cooperative basis, so that the parents and the children and the teachers all are involved. I think I mentioned that Miss [Kathryn] Beveridge's class at Kawānanakoa was actually planning the program, with the help of the teacher. So this kind of thing needs to be developed in the schools. Now, there've been many attempts along this line in the past, but they've been stopped for some reason or other.



WN: What kind of reasons?

CD: Let me try to identify. Townsend was stopped, I think, because [of how] the society was set up at that time. Before we became a territory, (it seems that) the business interests were controlling nearly everything that was going on in the monarchy and in the (republic). The business interests were very concerned that (they continue to have cheap labor. Schools that emphasized helping) kids think through what their life is and how they should live may upset their control. So having a person like Townsend who was encouraging (this point of view may not be good for business. Whether or not this was the reason), Alatau Atkinson (was appointed as) the first superintendent of schools when we became a territory in 1900. (This put Townsend as subordinate to Atkinson and subjected him to carrying out Atkinson's views on education which were very different from his.)

[Vaughan] MacCaughey [1919-23] is another one. He came in with very much the same ideas as Townsend, that (young people) should be able to work with teachers and the community in the kind of environment that would encourage them to enjoy working together, enjoy working on the plantation. But here again, the way MacCaughey was working was encouraging teachers and kids to give responses. MacCaughey would send out memos saying, "What do you think of this?" and "Why don't you go ahead and try this?" And teachers were doing that and the kids were feeling more free and open in the classrooms. But before long, that (apparently didn't suit the community leaders). The senate of the legislature at that time had an uproar, and MacCaughey was dropped from the school department and another person was brought in. I guess that was about 1923.

WN: MacCaughey, yeah. And who took his place was Willard [E.] Givens.

CD: That's right. For a two-year term [1923-25]. He was a very capable person, but more a person who followed the more traditional kind of approach, even though he was progressive in many ways.

Then, of course, Miles Cary [who never became superintendent] was the one that I mentioned to you before. He was one who, within the school system, was working in a very similar way to what Townsend was doing, what MacCaughey was doing. He worked closely with the community, closely with the legislature, closely with the school board. He was never fired as these other people were. But he wasn't happy about the way things were going. And so he finally resigned and went to the Mainland [in 1948] and was appointed professor at University of Minnesota, and was appointed to other positions until he died in 1959.

WN: Was there any kind of sympathy or movement to have Miles Cary become superintendent? Do you remember?

CD: I don't know of any such movement. There was a move to have him [become] a member of the faculty at the University [of Hawai'i] Teachers College [later, College of Education]. But someone apparently objected to that. I don't know the reasons for it, but I can guess the reasons—because he had too many ideas that would upset the leaders.

WN: Would you say that Miles Cary is one of the earlier movers of community/school-based management?

CD: Yes, except that the setting, of course, was very different and because (it wasn't called) that. But he involved the community. The student body organization had a student court, and they were involved in many kinds of things. Guidance was carried on in the classroom, giving youngsters (practice in) community affairs. So many of the features of the school/community-based management were going on at McKinley. And the school department (encouraged) him to do that. Give credit to Oren Long as superintendent. He supported Miles Cary all along, even though he didn't provide the leadership that Miles Cary might have liked to have had. And I supported him as director of secondary education. I supported him in every way I could, even though I didn't think of ways that I might have (given him more support).

WN: So Miles Cary was, in many respects, stifled. Would you use that term?

CD: I think so, yes. (Opposition to Miles didn't come out openly but) some people who worked closely with him (felt that he was stifled). I asked one person, I don't think he would want me to quote him, "Do you think Miles Cary resigned in disappointment?" Because that'd never come out publicly.

And he said, "Yes, I definitely think so."

WN: Playing devil's advocate here, giving power to individual schools or parents and students sounds like a really great idea, something that should be implemented, in my opinion. But also, I could see some of the drawbacks. One being, it becomes more of a survival-of-the-fittest thing. What if there are some schools that don't have an active parent-student-principal type of situation, that may, under this type of system, fall behind.

CD: Yes, but I think these things have to evolve. You can't get this kind of thing working (immediately). I think the direction the school department has to go is to make it possible for them to do it (and given them active support). I believe progress is made by people like Miles Cary who can see what can be done, and take the initiative, and move ahead doing it. So that what you have to have (are) catalysts that create the kind of situation that makes the parents want to do these things. Parents have other things to do, but if they feel that it's important for their kids to take leadership in the community, then they're going to come in and (help make it work).

But if you [merely] have meetings, like we used to do in PTA [Parent-Teacher Association] to talk about the budget that they can't do anything about, (they tend to say), "Okay, but I'm too darn busy. I don't have time to go out and sit down with the teacher. I can't tell her anything. She's the one that's going to control."

So the catalyst has to be in this situation, so that the thing moves ahead. I'm not familiar with (the details of) what's happening at Mā'ili School. I used to work closely with Mā'ili School, way back in the sixties, I didn't see anything exciting about what was happening. But they've moved apparently to the point where they really have the parents stirred up about doing something well. So someone (or someones) have been catalysts there, the principal or (others) in the community. They've moved to that point.

I've mentioned Arthur Kaneshiro two or three times. Arthur is the kind of person (who understands what I am talking about and I know he has been supporting the program at

Ma'ili). He's heading up this school/community-based management [program] as the director (in the state office).

WN: So you're looking at the state administration as being more of a facilitator rather than a . . .

CD: Yes, but also carrying out certain functions that cannot be carried on by the individual school or the district. The district will probably continue over a period of time now and certain functions have to be identified. I can't pinpoint those at this point. But they have to be pinpointed: things that are done by the district, things done by the state office. But the origin of these things that are going to be done should come from the schools. It used to come from the state office or the district office (and didn't encourage local initiative).

WN: Is a decentralized system one of the answers, do you think?

CD: Well, that's really what school/community-based management amounts to. It means that it's decentralized as far as the decisions for children are concerned. But it's centralized in terms of certain functions that cannot be done by the individual school.

WN: So you are in favor of keeping a centralized school system, emphasizing school/community . . .

CD: Well, with limitations. By all means, I'm not in favor of keeping the present centralized system. I think it's tremendously important to give the local school community more power to (decide what to do about educating their children and to) have money for what they want. If they want to do all these things and there's no money to do it, they're stymied. So the local community has to be able to—and the school department seems to be moving in this direction—spell out what their needs are. (And the people who control the sources of money have to be involved so that they understand what the needs are and so that the people in the community understand what they can expect in the way of financial support. What I am talking about is making democracy work at the community level. We hear a lot about being democratic—especially from people in Europe who have thrown off dictatorships and are struggling to develop a system to take its place. They can learn from us but we can learn from them because our system needs a lot of improvement.) Notice that in the paper the other day, it says money is being taken out of the school budget to put into maintaining the schools. That's important to maintain the schools, but if the school community is trying to do things and the money is taken away from them, they're stymied.

WN: What are your views on how the board of education is selected and how the superintendent is selected?

CD: I have lived through those years when the school board was appointed by the governor. The superintendent was appointed by the governor. It moved to the point where the superintendent was appointed by the school board, but the school board was still appointed by the governor. Then they moved to the next step [in 1966] where the people in the community elected [the school board]. None of the systems [has] worked perfectly. The present system is not working perfectly, but I think it's being improved. The fact that they cut down [the number of candidates by having] a primary [election] (for school board) this time, I think, was a good step forward. That was cut down so that only two (candidates) ran [in the general election] for

the position that's available on the school board rather than fifty or sixty. We have to keep refining this (process) so the school board selection is much closer to what's happening in the schools.

I had a (former) school board member tell me in an interview—I shouldn't quote him—that many school board members go in there for a certain specific reason, not [necessarily] to help kids. There's a teacher someplace that he doesn't like and he's going to get rid of this teacher, or there's a superintendent or a principal that he doesn't like. In other words, he goes in for a specific purpose, (instead of representing the people in providing better education).

WN: So, do you favor the elected school board?

CD: I favor the elected school board with modifications, yes, until a better [system] is found. I think the present system is the best we've had yet. I think it would be a mistake to go back to an appointed school board, unless there's a new factor that comes in. If the local communities could be involved in the appointment, okay. But if it's going to be like it was before, when a governor (throws out a superintendent and puts in another one.)

WN: Is the DOE highly political?

CD: It's certainly political. It has always been. One of the principals told me when I first started doing this research, "In the old days, we went out and got things for our schools. We didn't pay attention to the school department. If we wanted a new building, we went out to the community and we got the building." He would make contacts with the legislator. The legislator would go to a session and that would be his high priority, because this principal was supporting him in his next election. This kind of thing is too political, and it doesn't work for the welfare of the schools.

WN: What kind of control over their schools do principals have today? Are principals leaders of schools or are they—what are they—facilitators or middlemen?

CD: I think Charles Clark gave a message to the principals when he became superintendent in 1976 that expresses my views pretty well. He said to the principals, "It's up to you to take the leadership. I place that responsibility on you. If there are problems in your community, if there are problems in your school, you as a principal must take the leadership to take care of that, to see that those problems are solved." I think he held that point of view during his administration as superintendent. The principal should take initiative and (work with the faculty and the community to develop a continually improving educational environment). In a democracy, in a country like the United States, and Hawai'i as a state, we try to work democratically, we don't (often) throw people out. We try to give people a chance to improve, and if they don't, then evaluate them to the point so they either withdraw themselves or they're actually fired. But those things don't work smoothly in every case. The way it's working now, with politics involved, if a teacher or a principal or any other official has support from certain people who have power in the legislature or power in the school department or power with the school board, then very often the inefficient person is kept in instead of a better person being put in.

But going back to my original statement, then, I think the principal is the key person. It's



very important that school principals, people who are selected as school administrators, have a broad background of the world in general, society in general, how children grow and develop, and what kind of an environment children need in order to become successful youngsters. A principal has to be that kind of person if he's going to assume this responsibility. Unfortunately, we're far from that.

WN: Did you have those qualifications when you were principal?

CD: No. (Chuckles) As I look back on it now, I came through an administration that was authoritarian, that was from the top down and tended to be laissez-faire in many respects. I think, undoubtedly, part of my promotion in positions was that I was one who wanted to get ahead. And to me, getting ahead was (becoming an administrator. If I had good recommendations, and impressed the people doing the selections), I was selected. If I didn't, I wasn't selected. I can't take a great deal of credit, I don't think, for any promotions that I had in the sense that I was qualified for them.

But when I look back on it and say, "But who else was better qualified?" I didn't feel in any case that there was anyone else (available who) was better qualified. I wish that Miles Cary could have been in a position to have been (selected as director of secondary education) because he was a person that would have been much better qualified. But I can also think of other people who might have been put in who were much less qualified. So in every case of my appointment to these things, I feel that I qualified in the sense that I was probably at least as (well qualified as anyone) who might have been appointed.

But I didn't have the qualifications that were really needed for the position. And this is, again, one of the very weaknesses of the school department. Too much of it is on the basis of (inadequate description of the administrative positions to be filled and poor selection procedures).

WN: Is this unique to Hawai'i?

CD: I don't think so, no. I think it's typical. It's typical in society in general. I think even in business this happens. At the university it happens, I'm sure. It's part of the democratic process. You can have a Saddam Hussein who controls things from the top for eighteen (or more) years and decides to take over another country, or you can have a country that works in a much more cooperative way.

The Soviet Union was a dictatorial kind of (society) up until it started falling apart, because the people were fed up with it. Because they were controlled from the top, they didn't object because they couldn't do anything about it. But they had people who kept fighting underneath. And Gorbachev happened to come along at the right time to take advantage of (the unrest in the country and had ideas about what to do about it). I don't know whether they've ever had a university graduate as a president of the Soviet Union. He's the first one that really had qualifications. He also had the initiative to move ahead, so that he really changed the Soviet Union. Now he's running into the problems of trying to work democratically, and he may be thrown out because he doesn't have those qualifications. It's a difficult job to do.

WN: Is the Department of Education on the eve of change, would you say?

CD: I hope it is. But when I was coordinator of the Odell survey, I thought maybe we were, (chuckles) but we weren't. When Ralph Kiyosaki was made superintendent [in 1967]—we haven't talked much about Ralph Kiyosaki—I thought we were on the verge of it. His master plan that you may have seen is an outstanding document. The one weakness that I would say for Ralph Kiyosaki, which he probably would admit, that his experiences were not along the lines of how kids grew and developed, even though he used those expressions in his [master plan]. His experiences were more (in administration). And that was his contribution. He did provide an overall plan of administration. And he mentioned the importance of working with youngsters and the importance of understanding them. But the way he actually moved ahead (didn't have broad support).

WN: You told me once that, you know, you have these ideas on how teaching should be done, you have it in your head, but when it came time to actually implement it or communicate it to the students, that was the difficulty in teaching.

CD: Well, I think that's partly because I didn't have that experience. When I was teaching, I was teaching pretty much the way I was taught. I could go into a classroom, and I could see a Miss Beveridge, how she organized her class. I could go into the classroom at 'Āina Haina and see how Mrs. Wong organized her elementary classes in certain ways. But I didn't have the practical experience to do that. So that's what I meant by that.

WN: You said you were going to talk about the Berman report?

CD: Well, merely that I think this is what is the hope for the future. I think so because this is the first time the (leaders of the) community have really taken initiative to (work with the schools to) move ahead here on something. If these people can keep on working this way—the fact that they have brought [consultant Paul] Berman back again for a second follow-up is important. But it can't stop there. Because in a democratic society, there are these powers, these strengths that come along. If the more conservative people say, "That was a crazy idea having these things." [President George] Bush has faced that with his conservatives in the national government. And they're in the legislature here. Those forces keep working all the time. I think the big thing is to keep the momentum going here on this. And as far as I can see, some people disagree on this, but I think Charles Toguchi is doing pretty well in giving the leadership to the school department in order to work along these lines.

WN: Well, we're just about ending this. Do you have anything you want to say before I turn off the tape?

CD: Well, I can't think of [anything] offhand. I think when I review your notes, I think I will think of some other things that might be inserted. Because these are a lot of rambling things, and I personally, unless you object, may want to cross out a lot (chuckles) of these things because I don't see that they contribute to the. . . . I'm not sure that people are going to read a lot of the detail here on these things.

(Laughter)

WN: Well, you'd be surprised who would be interested in certain things.

CD: No, I realize that there are things that I may not think they're interested in that they would be. I trust your judgment in working on this and that you will be leaving in things you think are worthwhile.

WN: Okay. Well, thank you very much for your time.

END OF INTERVIEW

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